THE WEEKLY COMMERCIAL.

A LARGE SHEET CONTAINING ALL THE CURRENT NEWS, MISCELLANEOUS, LITERARY AND SCIENTIFIC INTELLIGENCE, AND VALUABLE READING FOR THE FAMILY.

TERMS OF THE WEEKLY:

Per Year, ($4 issued).....$3 00
In Clubs of Twenty.....1 50
One copy gratis to the getter-up of the Club.

The money must always accompany the order and in no instance can these be deviated from.

Postmasters are requested to act as Agents. Address COMMERCIAL, PITTSBURGH.

The Pittsburgh Commercial.

VOL. V.---NO. 8. WEEKLY EDITION. DECEMBER 28, 1867.

PITTSBURGH COMMERCIAL.

PUBLISHED DAILY BY THE PITTSBURGH NEWSPAPER AND PRINTING COMPANY.

OFFICE, 76 FIFTH STREET, (OPPOSITE POST-OFFICE.)

G. D. BRIGHAM, ... Editor.

. D. THOMPSON, . . Business Manager.

TERMS OF THE DAILY:

Single Copy.....5 Cents.
Delivered by Carrier, (per week).....25 Cents.
Mail Subscribers, (per year).....$10 00.
Address THE COMMERCIAL, PITTSBURGH.

SNOW.

BY DAVID GRAY.

Flowers upon the summer lea,
Daisies, cowslips, pale primroses—
These are sung from sea to sea,
As many a daring rhyme discloses,
Tangled wood and hawthorne dale
In many a songful match prevail!
But never yet, as well I mind,
In all their verses can I find
A simple tune, with quiet flow,
To match the falling of the snow.

O weary passed each stupid day,
And wistfully bowed each winter night;
O hilly grew each village way,
And mists enfolded every height;
And ever on the window-pane
A fretful gust blew down with rain,
And day by day in tawny brown
The leggie steam came heaving down—
I could have fallen asleep and dreamed
Until again spring sunshine gleamed.

And what! said I, is this the mode
That winter kings it now-a-days?
The Robin keeps his vest of shade,
And pipes his independent lays.
I've seen the day on Merk and hill,
That snow has fallen with a will,
Even in November! Now, alas!
The whole year round we see the grass—
Ah, little new will come and go
Without a single fall of snow.

It was the latest day but one
Of winter, as I questioned thus;
And though I an angry mood was on,
As at a thing most scandalous—
When lo! some flakelets on the pane
With sudden linkt-e-ting amain,
Till in an ecstasy of joy
I clapped and shouted like a boy—
O, rain may come and rain may go,
But what can match the falling snow!

It draped the naked sycamore
On Foresthorpe Hill above the well;
The elms of Beechbank o'er and o'er
Were silvered ribbed as it fell.
The distant Campsie peaks were lost,
And in these Cottin with his host,
Of gloomy pine trees disappeared,
Nor even a lonely ridge upreared;
O, rain may come and rain may go,
But what can match the falling snow!

After upon Solegirth moor,
Where I rather spy of withered brown
Is fringed with thread of silver pure
As alone the soft flakes waved down;
And on Gretchen-cairn's stark and dread
And Gorthishore's still and open strain,
It fallith, quiet as the birth
Of morning o'er the quickening earth.
O, rain may come and rain may go,
But what can match the falling snow!

And all around our Merkland home
In bield a shelt or virgin lawn;
On fairy softer, never trod
The nimble Dread or Rain.
There is a wonder in the air,
A living beauty everywhere;
As if the whole land were been planned,
But touched by Merkland's famous wand,
Suddenly woke beneath his hand
To form at bliss in fairy show—
A mighty ravishment of snow!

THE CHARGES OF THE CLERGY.

BY REV. GEO. T. DOLE.

Dedicated to those ecclesiastical societies who pay salaries of about six hundred dollars, more or less.

Ho! ye good clergymen!
Come, lead us onward!
We for your livelihood,
Promise six hundred.
Well your life's pilgrimage paid.
Let no demurs be made;
Apostles, 'tis never half
Enough such a sum as a hundred.

On march the ministers;
Scarce a remonstrance stirs:
Although all well they know
The people have blunder-ed,
Theirs not to make reply,
Though seeing the sin applies,
That scripture does not apply:
"Preachers should live," and did,
"Of the Gospel;" but how
To live on six hundred.

Charges to right of them;
Charges to left of them;
Charges confronting them;
Income sitting behind;
Flanked by bold butcher's carts;
Led by sharp tradesmen's arts;
All bound to have their parts
Of the six hundred.

Millers, and market men,
Peddlers, who sell again,
Agents and beggars then;
O! how poor ministers
Perked and pinched appeared!
Still up the prices go;
All things, for sooth, now show;
Labor, with saw or hoe;
Nothing but preaching's low,
Low as six hundred.

Black coat, its threads are bare;
Daughters cry "Nought to wear,"
And the boys do almost swear
About their old garments,
So sadly smothered.
But the minister's family
Should ne'er, like a camel, thigh;
Stem fast in the "needle's eye,"
Puffed up with vain riches.
Give but six hundred!

Half a year, possibly,
Half a year onward,
They might get, with weight of debt
Not hopelessly cumbered,
Six months, perhaps, they may
Keep hunger's wolf at bay—
Give, narrowly, scantily,
If promptly they get their pay;
Get—the six hundred.

But rent-bills to right of them;
Store-bills to left of them;
Charged upon all sides;
How flight the year through
Of! they have wondered,
still they go struggling on;
No funds to fall back upon;
Cash reserved fled and gone;
Not a dime left of them,
Left of six hundred.

Well earned the benison
Sought by thee, Tennyson,
On Baldelava's heroes,
Who faltered not, nor sou,
Though thousand guns thundered;
But half the brave "Light Brigade"
Sustains a whole year's raid
On their small shipwards made,
Till lives not even a shade
Of their six hundred.

—*Gaspey Amoutlet.*

OUR NEW SPORTING GROUND.

A Thrilling Walrus Hunt.

A correspondent of the Chicago *Tribune*, writing from Port Clarence, Russian America, narrates the following:

While at Kingegan, an Esquimaux village of 900 inhabitants, on the straits, I accompanied the natives in one of their walrus hunts in Behring's Sea, which was both dangerous and exciting. Before venturing into the straits, North winds are chosen, and incantations performed to insure safety. Their boats, which are made of walrus hides stretched over light wooden frames of driftwood, fifteen feet long; are kept near the water's edge in readiness to start without loss of time. With the wind fair, we started. About fifty boats, each containing nine Esquimaux, shoved off from the land for at the same time, and a general race was indulged in as we paddled out to sea.

The scene was grand and exciting. Every Indian pulled with all his strength, shouting and hooting as they dodged among the ice floes on their heads, and a general race with the wind. This was kept up until we were about forty miles out from shore, when they became separated in their search for walrus. Here a stop was made to listen for the bark of the animals which were heard about a mile ahead of us. One of the Indians exclaimed, ah-mal-yak-tok (great many) and we paddled lustily forward until we were in sight of the walrus, which were lying on the floes in large numbers, as far as the eye could reach, barking and playing with their young. Here another stop was made, and everything was paddled for the attack. Spears, guns, and harpoons were placed where they could be seized instantly, and a large walrus-hide rope was stretched the whole length of the boat, inside the gunwale, to each end of which were attached large sealskin boys.

Kap-al-tuks were put on over their deerskin coats, and every dark object carefully hidden from view of the animals. After these preparations we paddled rapidly and noiselessly forward, shooting the bow of the boat up on to the floe which had been selected with the largest number of walrus upon it. As they plunged off into the water each Indian hurled his spear into one of them, and fastened the line attached to its head to the rope connecting the buoys in the boat, which were immediately thrown overboard and the captured animals allowed to plunge and snort around in the water. As they come to the surface they are killed by thrusting a long lance through the body, or shot in the head when they do not come close enough to be lanced. When all were killed they were towed to a large floe, hauled out, skinned and dressed.

This is the work of but a moment, as those Esquimaux are well skilled in the use of the knife and thoroughly understand the anatomy of these animals. One of them extracted the bullet from the brain of a large walrus which I had shot, and gave it to me as a remembrance of the hunt. After the operation of dressing every part of the animal, except the gall, for which they have no use, was thrown into the boat, and we started for more, paddling and sailing around among the floes for nearly two days without success. A heavy fog settled down upon us, and we were lost for several hours, when it cleared away with a strong South wind, which rendered our position extremely critical, as

"The ice was here, the ice was there,
The ice was all around,
It cracked and growled, and roared and howled,
Like noises in a swound."

Our escape seemed almost miraculous, an opening happening to occur, through which we dodged until we reached open water, when we set sail and reached shore in safety after being three days out, with but very little to eat. Several boats have gone out in this manner and never returned.

The bark Clara Belle arrived here June 27, and we are once more in communication with the world, and about to bid adieu to our Arctic prison. Never did men feel more rejoiced than did our party when the vessel sailed into anchorage in the spit. Starvation with all its attendant evils, fled with her approach, and the sufferings were forgotten in her arrival. We are informed that this is now United States territory and the Stars and Stripes are now floating over our station in honor of the event. The Clara Belle will take us to Plover Bay, E. S., where will await the arrival of the Nightingale, while she will go to gather the other parties at that place, after which we shall all start for home.

JUST MARRIED.—A few weeks after a late marriage, a husband had some peculiar thought when putting on his last clean shirt, as he saw no appearance of a washing. A few days upon the earlier than usual one morning and kindled a fire. When putting on the kettle he made a noise on purpose to arouse his wife. She immediately peeped over the blankets and then exclaimed, "My dear, what are doing?" He deliberately responded, "I've put on my last clean shirt, and I'm going to wash one now for myself." "Very well," replied Mrs. Easy, "you had better wash one for me, too, while you are at it."

THE Philadelphia *North American* thinks that Mr. Stanton has been materially damaged by the President's Message, giving the reasons for suspending him, and expresses the opinion that his restoration by the Senate under present circumstances is out of the question.

THE HOUSEKEEPER.

SOYER'S CHRISTMAS PUDDING.—This receipt, if closely followed, would, at this festive season of the year, save tons of fruit and other expensive ingredients, which are partly wasted for the want of knowing how to turn them to the best advantage. This pudding will be found sufficient for eight persons after a Christmas dinner. Carefully prepare the following previous to mixing the pudding: Four ounces of stoned raisins, four ounces of sultanas, half a pound of well-cleaned currants, half a pound of beef suet, chopped fine, two ounces of powdered white sugar, four ounces of flour, half a pound of bread-crumbs, twelve bitter almonds blanched, chopped small, half a nutmeg grated, two ounces of candied citron, the peel of half a small lemon, chopped fine, separately, put in a basin, break over four eggs, and add half a gill of brandy. Mix these all well the evening before wanted, cover over till the morning, and when all is prepared, add half a gill of milk, again well stir your pudding; slightly butter a cloth, sprinkle a little flour over, put it in a basin, pour in the mixture, tie your cloth in the usual way, not too tight; put in half a gallon of boiling water; add more now and then if required; let it simmer two hours thirty minutes, turn out of cloth, and serve on a hot dish.

Serve plain, if preferred, or with the sauce only. After which, when at the dining-room door, pour round a gill of either brandy or rum, which set on fire with a piece of paper; place the dish on the table, let it burn half a minute, and pour over it a sauce made as follows: half a pint of ordinary plain melted butter, rather thick, add to it two teaspoonfuls of sugar, the juice of half a lemon, and a pat of butter; stir quick, pour over your pudding when very hot. In the event of some of the ingredients, such as almonds, candied orange or lemon peel not being obtainable in some country places, the pudding will still be good, although not so delicate in flavor.

STUFFING FOR TURKEYS, FOWLS, AND VEAL.—Chop finely one quarter of a pound of suet, and with it mix double the quantity of bread crumbs, a large spoonful of chopped parsly, nearly a teaspoonful of thyme and marjoram, mixed, one eighth of a nutmeg, some grated lemon peel, salt and pepper, and bind the whole with two eggs. A teaspoonful of the juice of shalot or onion may be added at pleasure.

BOILED TURKEY.—Draw your turkey, wash it clean, season it with salt, but no pepper. Make a force-meat of some cold veal finely minced, a little grated ham, pepper and salt to the taste, add also a little grated nutmeg and powdered mace. Fill the inside of the bird with this force-meat, tie or skewer it well. Dredge flour over it, and wrap it in a napkin. Put it in a large pot with plenty of water which has been salted. Let it boil gently for two hours, which will cook it sufficiently, unless it be a very large one. Take it out of the napkin, place it on a large dish, garnish the edges of the dish with boiled parsley, and serve with a rich oyster sauce in a tureen.

MINCED MEAT.—Five pounds of beef or tongue, of suet, seven pounds of sugar, seven pounds of apples, three pounds of raisins, three pounds of currants, three nutmegs, two ounces of cinnamon, a dessert spoonful of allspice, one small teaspoonful of ground mace, the juice of two lemons and the grated rind of one, moisten it with equal portions of wine and cider, brandy to the taste. Boil the meat in water which has been salted, and a teaspoonful of one teaspoonful of salt to every quart of water. When it is tender stand it away to get perfectly cold before it is chopped. Wash, pick and dry your currants, prepare the spices, and seed the raisins. Pare and core the apples, chop them fine, chop the meat very fine, add the fruit, sugar and spice, lemon juice, and grated lemon rind, (also the brandy and wine.) Mix the whole thoroughly; it will be fit for use on the following day. If you wish to keep it for a period meat for several weeks, chop the meat and add the currants, raisins sugar and spice, but leave out the apples, lemon, wine and cider; mix it with the ingredients and merely moisten it with brandy; pack the mixture tightly in a stone jar and cover it close. When you wish to make it into pies, take out some of the meat, chop your apples and mix with it in the proportions given above. Moisten with cider, and add wine and brandy to your taste.

QUAKER PUDDING.—Scald a quart of milk; when almost cold put to it four eggs well beaten, a spoonful and a half of flour, some nutmegs and sugar; tie it close in a buttered cloth; boil it an hour. Turn it out with care, lest it should crack; melted butter, a little wine, and sugar.

POOR MAN'S CAKE.—One tablespoonful of butter, one egg, one cup of sugar, one of sweet milk or cream, one teaspoonful of soda and two of cream of tartar, mixed dry in two cups of flour.

The Story of a Remarkable Man.

Just six years ago there died, at a little town by the seaside in Sussex, England, a member of the English Parliament, who united in himself some of the most opposite, and one would imagine, conflicting characteristics. He was the eighth son of an Earl; his mother was the daughter of a Bishop; he was the descendant of a staunch line of Tory ancestry; associated in marriage connections with a dozen leading families in the Peerage. He had been the leader in the world of fashion, and the darling of singers and actresses; and yet, with these qualities, he was, at the same time, the leader of the extreme Chartist operatives; the pet of even the ugly faced Fenians, who at one time contemplated insurrection for the five points, since conceded in peaceable ways. He was at once a confidant and friend of Louis Napoleon, and champion of Mazzini.

To this remarkable man left no enemy behind, and despite his extraordinary pursuits and companions, left the prefix of "honest" to his name. To this hour the memory of "Honest Tom Duncombe" is fondly cherished by the Immense metropolitan constituency which he represented, but in all the large cities of England.

Mr. Thomas Slingsby Duncombe, M. P., had all the advantages of birth and fortune. He was at Harrow, one of the best of our public and aristocratic schools; he was in the crack regiment of "Guards," and rose from an ensign to a captaincy, and all the paths of fashionable life were open to him. He was one of the handsomest young men about town, as well as the the best dressed, and was the heir to considerable landed estate. There was about him an indefinable charm of grace and refinement. He went in for dress, and became as perfect a dandy as London ever saw. He went in for equipage, and his carriage became familiar to every one in the East Ganger. He went in for horses, and with as much spirit rode the best hack in the Park as he backed the favorite at Newmarket. His vote and interest were sought as a patron of the drama, and he became constant in his attendance on the nightly assemblies of the principal performers, behind the scenes and before. In all these gratifications he associated with the aristocracy. And nothing could have been less anticipated than his undertaking the advocacy of extreme Radical opinions, and yet he was for nearly a quarter of a century the workingman's representative *par excellence*. It is a singular fact.

Duncombe began life a rich man, and ended it poor, though he was still in Parliament, and lived in ease. He was the son of good nature, and a gentleman. He was fond of the turf, and lost heavily. He was fond of the society of actresses and opera singers, and they liked him fearfully. At Drury Lane Theatre, not many years ago, a chosen band of Londonians in public life, including poets, painters, and some five or six leading men of the public press, were favored with a sort of *carte blanche* to mingle with the actors and actresses in what is termed the "Green Room," and it was there Tom Duncombe (as he was always called) was, of all, the most conspicuous. In play, one of his aristocratic associates—Lord Chesterfield—contrived to get rid of him on his side of the house, by a millstone of debt to hang round his neck for the rest of his life. It was no less than £100,000. His horses were such splendid animals that the West End tradesmen were in delight when they stopped at the shop door, and the aristocracy courted with avidity by marquises and dukes, and men would have looked on him with envy had not his courtesy disarmed them.

But there is now the really extraordinary part of his life to tell. All the time he was out doors this "glass of fashion and mold of form," he was, in Parliament, the vehement advocate of universal suffrage; the enemy of the State Church; and the public platform, with men like Feargus O'Connor, the Chartist chief. In 1841 he was selected to present the great Chartist petition, signed by 1,500,000 persons. He was one of the most popular men out of the House of Commons. He spared no one in his defense of the masses against the ruling class, and said things which from the lips of others would have brought the speaker into the custody of the Sergeant-at-arms. He had a way of going straight to the heart of a topic, and a dashing, winning air which was irresistible.

In the midst of the gayest part of his career, he was constantly presiding at public dinners, attending Chartist meetings, making speeches and attending committees. Days of labor and nights of amusement broke up his constitution at last, and for the concluding ten years of his life he rarely accepted an invitation to parties of any kind. And yet, during this period, always fighting off his obligations. His father died in 1848, leaving him an estate. This he had to sell, and the amount realized, namely, £150,000, went at once to his creditors. All this was known to his constituents, but they would have forgiven him anything.—*London Correspondence of Chicago Tribune.*

A Fault to be Corrected.

The Boston *Advertiser* refers to a "grievous fault" of which Boston audiences are not alone guilty. The suggestions for amendment is as pertinent to Pittsburgh as Boston. There is indeed one very grievous fault of which the average Boston audience is guilty, and against this we have for a long time made our protest almost alone. We refer to the habit of leaving the theatre, the lecture room, or the concert hall, a little before the performance is concluded. It is certainly true, notwithstanding the bustle which so often occurs before the close of an evening's entertainment, that it is made by only a few people who have this selfish habit of putting all their neighbors to discomfort for the sake of gaining perhaps ten worthless minutes; and we are quite willing to believe that it is in many cases the result of thoughtlessness. We should be glad to think that this reprehensible practice was no more common in Boston than in other cities, but we have sometimes found such a belief very hard to entertain. That it exists, and that it excessively annoys lecturers, musicians, and actors, as well as the majority of the audience itself, is a patent fact.

PRISON DISCIPLINE.

The Punitory and Reformatory Systems---The Ohio Reform School.

Special Correspondence of Pittsburgh Commercial.

LANCASTER, OHIO, December 17, 1867.

Some three years ago I met in the cars going from Pittsburgh to Philadelphia, a large-hearted, plain, practical, benevolent Quaker farmer from New Jersey. He had just come from visiting the "Ohio Reform School" situated some six miles from this place, as one of the Commissioners from New Jersey, to recommend a plan for a Refuge or Reformatory, for juvenile delinquents in that State. He had visited all, or nearly all, the Penitentiaries, Houses of Refuge, &c., in the country. His soul was full of the subject. His talk, and a letter which he showed me from Mr. G. E. Howe, the principal of this school, made that trip one of the most delightful reminiscences of my life. Though interested, I was incredulous and longed to see for myself a place where bad boys, of the worst type, were kept in a "House of Refuge," without walls, without locks, without guards, by night or day, and where the law of love, the spirit of Christ, was the chief thing relied on to restrain, control and reform bad boys convicted of crime, and usually heretofore sent to the Jail, Penitentiary or House of Refuge. I thought there must certainly be some mistake or humbug about it; that either the boys were small, and not very bad, or that in some way my friend had been deceived or mistaken. Yesterday being in that part of Ohio I rode some twenty or more miles in the intense cold and snow to see for myself this "new thing under the sun," and having spent the night at the institution, purpose to give you some of my impressions. I am the more disposed to do so, from reading with pleasure the recent articles in the COMMERCIAL on the subject of our Penitentiary system, and the probability of building a new prison. Before anything of that sort is done, let the public look at what is doing elsewhere in this matter of managing criminals. Let the public know something of the horrors of the boasted Pennsylvania *solitary system* and its admirable results, if it has any. For forty years we have been doming men and women, boys and children too, sometimes, to this horrible place, without thought, feeling or sympathy—without reflection or knowledge of what they were suffering. I myself have known a man deliberately starve himself to death, rather than endure it. How few of the excellent and respectable gentlemen who have been inspectors of the Penitentiary in Allegheny, until very recently, have been accustomed to go into the cells and take those wretched beings by the hand and listen to their tale of woe—to hear them speak of the horrors of those awful sixteen-hour nights spent in darkness—to see the print of their heels on the floor and to see the mark of their hands on the wall as they turned on their ceaseless march, when sleep fled from them and they thought of wife and child and friend and freedom—aye, and while too they plotted revenge and hardened their hearts.

But to the Farm School. Arranged on a different idea altogether—on the idea that we have no right to punish for the mere sake of punishment. That while we have a right to protect the community from the depredations of wicked men, convicted of crime, it is clearly our duty, as far as practicable, to reform the man and if possible restore him to society a better and a more useful person.

Surely this was a noble—even a godlike aim. I may be mistaken, but so far as I know, no such enterprise has been undertaken with such means and such instrumentalities and with such aims. They commenced with some nine or ten from the Penitentiary, nine years ago. In that time, they have received nearly one thousand and have sent away over seven hundred, leaving them now about two hundred and sixty. These have been sentenced to the school for crimes of almost every name: murder, arson, burglary, passing counterfeit money, horse stealing, grand and petit larceny, assault and battery with intent to kill, incorrigibility, &c., &c. Many of the inmates have been from among the wealthiest families in the State—while the greatest number by far, have been from the lowest and most wretched haunts of pollution and vice. As I understood it, it was those whose offenses would have caused them to be sent to the Penitentiary, that made up the great number of the inmates.

Of course, as it has been in operation nine years I felt sure those dwelling in the neighborhood must have formed opinions of its character. I, therefore, took special pains to inquire of many gentlemen whom I met as to the character of the institution. From every one of them I received a uniform and warm commendation of the school and of Mr. Howe, chief commissioner—in other words, the principal or elder brother, as he is called by the inmates, and of his accomplished and excellent wife. These gentlemen were manufacturers, merchants, farmers and professional men, to whom I was casually introduced, and of the highest character. They felt it was a perfect success. They spoke of the boys coming into Lancaster, like men, and behaving with entire propriety, and bore their testimony to the excellence and value of the school in every way. School I say designedly, for it is not even called a Penitentiary or House of Refuge, or by any other name implying punishment. No such words are used in or about the institution, or as far as I could see or hear, in the neighborhood. And this very thing may, perhaps, be regarded as the key to the whole system.

Approaching the school, instead of finding it hid away in the woods, far away from the public road, as I expected, we found it "a city set on a hill," with the public road running through the farm, and directly in front of the buildings, beautifully laid out, and exhibiting much neatness and taste. The buildings are of brick, neatly and tastefully built. The gates wide open, and the whole surrounded by a low post and board fence, thus allowing every opportunity of escape to those so disposed. The first sight which met our eyes was that of a large company of boys engaged in sledding, with all the glee and enjoyment so natural to boys, on a side track, without the too common accompaniment of snow-balling those who were coasting. Another sight was a squad engaged in making in an excavation for a cellar, or something of the kind.

We were most cordially received by Mrs. Howe, in the absence of her husband, who had been absent for a few weeks in ill health. Of all the wonders that I saw there none exceeded this, that the whole establishment seemed to be managed by this refined and accomplished woman, as principal, in Mr. Howe's absence, and that all seemed to look to her, to respect and love her as an honored mother. To many, this will doubtless seem like exaggeration, nonsense and delusion. I can only say, let them go and see for themselves. They may be sure of a cordial welcome and a frank answer to all their questions. At least such was the experience we met with. But my letter is too long now. If you have room I shall give another instalment to-morrow. I.

THE Supreme Court of New York rendered a decision against General Butler, who, as executor of his brother, the late Andrew J. Butler, refused to make a return to the Surrogate of the property belonging to deceased out of, as well as in, that State. The decision declares that executors must return inventories of all the personal property of their testators, wherever such property may be. The practical effect of this will be to compel the General to submit an inventory of all the property belonging to deceased, which he became possessed of in New Orleans during the occupation of that city by the Union forces. The case has been pending for nearly two years and a half, but under this ruling of the Court the way is clear for a final adjustment of the difficulties in the way of settlement. There are extraordinary reasons for keeping back an inventory. A nephew of Gen. Butler is the principal prosecutor in the case.

SPEAKER COLFAX has written a letter to Mr. Conway in New Orleans, in the course of which he says: "While I do not believe in confiscation, or anything looking like revenge, and hope to see suffrage as universal as safety to the cause of loyalty will permit, and the restored States guaranteeing education to all, I would not modify the terms of reconstruction in any essential feature one hair's breadth. If the former rulers of the South, whose baffled ambition plunged a peaceful country into the carnage of civil war, refused to exercise the right of voting which Congress proffered to the great bulk of them, on their own heads, not ours, will be the responsibility." This is the undoubted sentiment of the loyal people of the country, in the terse language of Gen. Grant, they "who supported the Government during the rebellion" and "sustained it throughout its trials."

Pittsburgh and Toledo as Railway Points.

The Toledo *Blade* advocates the construction of a railway from a point at or near Wooster, on the line of the Pittsburgh, Fort Wayne and Chicago Railway, to Toledo, thus opening direct communication between Pittsburgh and Toledo. The New York Central, and the Pennsylvania Central lines, with their far-reaching connections, bid fair to control largely all the land traffic, east and west, of the States bordering the great Lakes.

It is rumored that the New York Central is about to consolidate with the Lake Shore, the Toledo and Cleveland, and the great Southern Michigan and Northern Indiana, with their connections, for the purpose of forming a colossal through line. The Pennsylvania Central, by its connection with the Pittsburgh, Fort Wayne and Chicago, and the control it has acquired over some of the most important lines in Central Illinois, has become the most formidable rival of the Lake Shore combination. It is not claimed that the Pennsylvania Central could divert any very considerable amount of the Eastern and Western traffic which now moves over the New York Central and its connections; but it is argued that, inasmuch as trade flows in every direction, as well as East and West, the Northwest and Southwest should clasp hands and exchange commodities. This question is asked: "Of iron manufactures alone, how much more might Toledo buy in Pittsburgh, which is now obtained from New York, Albany and Buffalo, were the railroad connections from Toledo eastward, by way of Pittsburgh, as direct and complete as they now are eastward by way of Buffalo?" Toledo now has converging in her midst, five railways, and upwards of five hundred miles of canal. The valuable products of the great State of Michigan now freight the Lake route, and what she ships from the factories of Philadelphia goes over the same course. What Michigan gets from Pittsburgh is obtained by many crooked routes and transfers south of Cleveland. An independent and rival route eastward, by way of Pittsburgh, to the great coal fields and to the Atlantic, is urgently demanded, and it is suggested that the Pennsylvania Central, and the Pittsburgh Fort Wayne Chicago companies extend their road from Wooster to Toledo, and thence to Ann Arbor and Saginaw, in Michigan. Other roads are interested in this enterprise, such as the Baltimore and Ohio, the Atlantic and Great Western, and the New York and Erie; and it is intimated that, should the Pennsylvania Central and its connecting lines not secure this prize, some of the other companies will ere long avail themselves of it. The Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Company might obtain this important northern connection by way of the Mansfield and Newark Railroad, striking westward from Mansfield to Tiffin, and thence to Toledo and Michigan.

More About Alaska.

The newspaper correspondents are still busily engaged in writing up the advantages and disadvantages of our new possessions in the North. Many important and interesting facts are being developed; but not until the whole country has been searched out and explored, shall we know whether we have made a paying investment or not. It is not specially encouraging to know that agriculture can never of itself be a lucrative occupation in Alaska. In the eastern group of islands—those about Sitka—the rains of August and September prevent the raising of grain, and destroy the nutritious qualities of the grass. The land is barren and ungeneous, and such vegetables as grow to perfection are generally worthless from some cause or other. There is no juice in one, too much water in another; lack of flavor in this, toughness of fiber in that, and the whole list may be classed as inedible. Attempts have been made to cultivate the apple, peach, pear and cherry, but these have likewise failed. The fruit buds mature, and is stunted and insipid. Currants ripen, and so do raspberries, but the latter are indigestible. A few potatoes are grown, but they are of inferior quality. Excessive rains prevent the cultivation of fruit, vegetables or grain, and if an American population is ever to subsist there the supplies will have to come from some other quarter. A more generous soil is found on the island of Kodiac, five hundered and and fifty miles west of Sitka. The summer here is dry, and while the sea air prevents the raising of grain, all varieties of hardy vegetables are grown abundantly. Grass is luxuriant and good for pasturage. The natives use wild game and fish, and there is no demand for beef cattle. The cost of growing cattle here would exceed that of California or Oregon, as the cattle have to be wintered four months in the year. The island has pasturage enough for eight or ten thousand head, and the soil is the best of any of the islands of Alaska. The forest trees are spruce, fir and cedar. The population is only eighteen hundred. St. Paul, the capital, is next to Sitka in size, and has less than five hundred souls. Oonlaska, the second in importance of the long series of islands stretching fifteen hundred miles to the westward, is seven hundred miles distant from Kodiac. It has seven hundred inhabitants; all natives, except the Governor. There is no wood here, and turf is used for fuel. Grass is abundant, but there are no cattle. There is a volcano on the island, six thousand feet high, with vast quantities of lava in the gorges leading from its crater. The soil resembles that of Kodiac, but the surface is more mountainous. There are but few inhabitants, who subsist on seal and fish. Seven hundred miles west of this is an unlaterrupted range of islands, large and small, all of volcanic origin, and destitute of trees. The only land animal known is the fox. Attoo is the name of one of the islands, and it is the most western soil of the American Republic. It has about one hundred natives, living amid the rudest scenery.

It is claimed, however, that at Cook's Inlet, on the main land opposite Kodiac there is an area of from ten to fifteen thousand square miles of level, rich soil, which will mature grains and grass, and supply a large population. There is neither oak nor ash timber in the entire territory, and the deciduous trees of this vast region are few. There is spruce, fir, cedar and hemlock enough, were it accessible, to supply the world with building material for a century. The fisheries will first engage the attention of trade, as cod, salmon, halibut and other fishes abound, and the fishing ground is unlimited. The market for dried fish has always been certain in the East, and must prove equally remunerative on the Pacific coast.

THE resolution of the grave Senator Chandler to accord belligerent rights to Abyssinia may do well enough as an elephantine joke; but after all it might be well to consider whether it is not best just at present to avoid as much as possible such causes as may irritate others without benefiting ourselves. It would at least be well enough to await the blockading of the Abyssinian coasts; when he may discover that that empire has not the rights of a belligerent and any proclamation on our part quite out of place.

IF it were not that our readers might misunderstand us and think that we were simply punning, we would like to impress upon their minds the fact that recent events show clearly that it was according to nature and custom for those who went in for black *mail* to go in for Blackmore. Of soap it is likely that it will be said hereafter that "it has rix." The late success may now perhaps be accounted for.

SHOCKING—That the earthquakes should be so persistently offering themselves to the Honorable Secretary of State—and should even come over on to this continent—even to the States in their anxiety to become ours! They seem as if they would even go to "knocking at the door of our dealer in shaky islands." Have we or have we not bought "a Tartar?"

THE arrival of Ole Bull in this country, and the statement that he will give a series of concerts this winter, have been received with pleasure by thousands, who remember him with sensations of delight. During the past ten years he has been playing in the great capitals of Europe, with the same success as in former years. In St. Petersburg, especially, he re-awakened great enthusiasm.

THE idea which has been hatching in the brain of the Democracy, to steal a march on the Republicans by nominating Grant first, has been given up since the famous "private" letter has come to light. Since its publication the General has lost cast wonderfully with that party.

WE are authorized to state that the report that Rev. D. W. Riddle, D. D., had resigned his professorship in Washington and Jefferson College, at Canonsburg, Pa., is entirely unfounded.

A Scathing Letter to General Hancock.

Hon. J. R. G. Pitkin has written a most scathing letter to General Hancock, relative to his administration of affairs since assuming command of the Fifth Military District. The ostensible purpose of the letter is to request that the recent appointment of the writer, as Secretary of State, contained in the suspended order of General Mower, may not be confirmed. We subjoin a few of the more pointed paragraphs:

When that appointment was announced by our local prints no one could have been more surprised than myself. I had sought nothing at the hands of that worthy officer, and a regard for the political friends, whose opinion I hold dear, will certainly dissuade me from ever obtruding upon his successor. Had the former been continued in command, I am persuaded that his appointees would have cordially and materially assisted him in the labor of reconstruction, and I am equally certain that not one of them would have consented to be miserable stewards of an apostate Press ideal.

There are rebels, numerous and abject enough for this service, buzzing like wasps about your headquarters and stinging loyal reputations—"dogs ready soon to fawn on any man." The officer who suffers them, and installs them in public place, accepts a desperate risk.

Speaking of other matters, Mr. Pitkin remarks that "every official indirection is a danger for which the best field credit does not compensate," and adds:

It is when a soldier confesses in his initial order, that the military should defer to a civil authority, which is for with recommitted to rebel hands, either that he has suddenly ceased to aspire to high national ends or that his patient waiting since fell for a chance to surrender to the enemy is at length fully rewarded. That enemy is at least consistent, has not changed its front, has not forborne its old enmities.

That I cannot capitulate with you suffices as a reason why my name should no longer be entertained at headquarters with reference to a bureau of this State. Your assent, Sir, has lent renewed cheer to one class of our people—it is a class which, by its practice upon one Convention is can understand—a class which has attempted in addition in this city—which has already besought our public trusts for its favorites and which anew, with impatiently seeks to render loyalty again a discredit and a peril, and which may reasonably ponder its existence to him whose enviable distinction it is to be not only one of the five district commanders that can exercise more force in a mad whim of a President than in a solemn decree of Congress.

The writer then refers to the statement of General Hancock, that he "had been informed that the administration of criminal justice in the courts had been clogged, if not entirely frustrated," by negro jurors; and after remarking that "it is easy to determine whence this information comes" to the General, adds:

Men, who have just doffed their rebel uniforms, and as proficients in partisan shames, have been virtually made jurors to-day, will, in the future, be a chapter of whose biography will be, in too many cases, an indictment: men with whom the inserted color may be the odium of having defeated the ends of justice. A dozen hands from whose skirts you cannot wash the red smear of rebellion may shoot erect to a juror's oath, and to-morrow's sun may look down on the work of their observance of the latter vow is, perhaps, the most serious feature of the whole matter. Your late order of the jury box. When, sir, not one of your local loyal leaders shall longer crouch at your heels in servile fear, and when a better sense of duty than yours shall have declared, as soon it will, that a tempered justice mentions no colors except that of crime, you will discover that the black letter will be the only one in the code of administration of justice, "and especially of what some in this community may well complain of not having yet received its full share."

The subject of the Presidential aspirations of General Hancock are alluded to, and these remarks are made:

But some one must soon thrust his feet into the Presidential shoes, and your name will be urged, in general, so to be persuaded by a Democratic nomination excites less solicitude for the nation than for yourself. You have already stepped out of the uniform upon your back, and I cannot believe that contempt for the civil office to be used has not already tried sharply for the purpose of a political canvass, with its stump speeches, like the memories of Johnsonian speeches, collated in advance at the White House, and issued here as "general orders."

The letter concludes in these emphatic words:

The writer has been in the car with you on duty, to perform—first, to rend with its two hands, white and black, each of your adverse orders to tatters, to preserve every personal right, of every color and every distinction of race; and second, to place those hands in attitude to receive the bullets which were sent to face with him, with the firmness of a lost defense. His conscience was clear, and his all carried, and distinctly to admonish him that the mistakes pardonable in a soldier would be unfortunate for Louisiana, is to hold more so for himself.

Important Principle Decided.

The breaking down of the Pemberton Railroad Company, at Johnstown, on the occasion of the visit of President Johnson, in September, 1866, by which several persons were killed, and a large number crippled for life, is fresh in the memory of our readers. A large number of suits were then instituted against the company for damages, and one of these—Gillis vs. the Pennsylvania Railroad Company—was recently disposed of before Judge Taylor, at Ebensburg. This was a test case, and the issue turned upon a single question, namely—whether the railroad company was bound to so construct their platform that it would support any weight which might be put upon it, or whether they were only required to make it sufficiently strong and safe to transact their ordinary business. The evidence was very voluminous, and the arguments of counsel most elaborate. His Honor, Judge Taylor, in an equally elaborate opinion, decided the legal question against the plaintiff, and instructed the jury to find for the defendant without leaving the box. The counsel for the plaintiff will appeal to the Supreme Court from the decision of the Court below. Until a decision is reached before the higher Court, it is understood that no other case growing out of the fall of the platform will be tried by them in Cambria county.

The Wheeling Iron Mills.

The Wheeling *Intelligencer* states that the hands in the iron mills in that city have assented to the reduction of wages of which they had been notified a week or two since, but they are waiting to see what course the fellow workmen in Pittsburgh would pursue. We can inform our friends at Wheeling that the iron workers here have wisely consented to go to work under the reduction, and that they are now working in perfect accord with the manufacturers, who hope, under the amicable arrangement made, to keep their mills in full operation during the winter. Our mill owners are anxious to retain possession of the large trade which they have built up here, at so great an expenditure of capital, even if they should run without being able to realize anything more than a mere nominal profit; and it will be to the manifest advantage of our mill hands, as well as all others interested in the iron business here, if they can assist the mill owners in accomplishing so desirable a result.

THE New York Constitutional Convention seems to be a curious body. In October last, it adjourned till after the election, having been in session some three months without accomplishing much. By so doing it involved itself in the question whether or not the act was not legal suicide. Last week, tired of Albany, it appointed a committee to proceed to New York to obtain place to meet there; but failing, they turned their attention to Troy

Weekly Commercial.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 28, 1867.

CHRISTMAS.

Though without a State Church, it is to be presumed that we are all happy to think and speak of ourselves as a Christian people. And to all and each one of us as such, the season of the Christian year at which by the lapse of time we have again arrived, must be fraught with more than every-day interest. The attention of the early Christians seems to have been more especially arrested and attracted by the thought of the incarnate Word as He appeared among men in the fulness of manhood. His portraiture by the fourth Evangelist, it should seem, commended itself more to the sentiment of those times and was more dwelt upon than His portraiture by those evangelists who enter into details about His birth and infancy. Though IRENÆUS early in the second century remarked that the Savior became a child for children that the child nature also might be purified and ennobled by Him,—yet there is no evidence that the idea of CHRIST as a child, held a prominent place in the thoughts of the Faithful in those early times, or was so fondly cherished as it afterwards became. The importance of the idea appears to have been first fully appreciated in the West. The Western Church established the Christmas festival—which, however, very soon passed over into the church of the East. But even in the Western Church the evident traces of the institution or custom still discoverable, do not reach back beyond the time of LABERIUS, a Bishop of Rome in the fourth century. In his time it must have been well known and generally observed. We know this from an interesting circumstance. When this Roman Bishop, on the 25th of December, A. D. 360, was officiating at the consecration to the cloister of MARCELLA the sister of ST. AMBROSE, he addressed the candidate with the words, "Thou seest what a multitude of people have assembled for the birthday festival of thy bridegroom." Then, as to the East, we find this festival first mentioned in a sermon preached at Antioch, on the 25th of December, A. D. 386. The preacher was JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, or JOHN of the Golden Mouth, so named for his eloquence. He says: "Though a new thing, not known for so long as ten years in this city, it has already attained equal consideration with the most ancient festivals, as attested by the numerous assembly now present, more than the edifice can comfortably hold." He also speaks of it as being, or deserving to be, the "*metropolis* of all the feasts," whatever precisely that may mean. In answer to the question how this festival originated, different opinions are entertained. Indeed there has been much controversy on the subject. Some think that it sprung up in Rome, in place of the Saturnalia; or that Christmas was merely the Saturnalia christianized. A heathen custom attended with many and gross abuses, was quietly transformed, and thus brought within the sphere of Christian thought and observance. This Pagan custom in honor of SATURN, had for centuries been celebrated towards the end of December, in memory of the golden age, which was believed to have flourished in Italy under the benignant sway of that mythical king, or deity, in exile from the celestial abodes. In the heathen ceremony, the untying of the woolen threads, with which the feet of the god were tied, symbolized the dissolution of the bonds by which men were fettered to civil ordinances and hereditary usages. The slave became free for a time, assumed his master's garments, and put on the hat, which was the badge of his changed condition. He became for a while the master, and the master became the man and waited on his own servant. The markets were closed and the courts and the schools took holiday. It was a time for the exercise of hospitality and for the exchange of presents; children received gifts of little images and dolls made of clay or wax, while adults gave each other lights (a sort of candles) which were set up and burned in the temples. How easy it would be to give a Christian meaning to this heathen festival! With CHRIST first dawned the true golden age. He first gave freedom to those in bonds; while to all children the perennial fountain of blessed largess and benefactions was opened in the CHRIST child! There was still another heathen festival, corresponding in point of time still more exactly with our Christmas, which was equally susceptible of a Christian interpretation, and therefore of adaptation to Christian purposes. This was the birth-day *fete* of Mithra, or the invincible sun. It was of Persian origin, and had been introduced into Italy. The shortest day being passed, the Sun-god again goes forth from midnight darkness, victorious over his enemy, and rejoices as a hero to run his course. This was the fact commemorated in the festival of Mithra. How obvious and in one sense appropriate to substitute Him of whom the Prophet wrote, "Arise! shine, for thy Light is come and JEHOVAH'S glory is arisen upon thee" (Isaiah, 60—1.) This reference of the Christmas festival to the festival in honor of the sun is repeatedly made the subject of allusion, and even of direct remark by the church Fathers, we are told. The gradual extension of the Light brought into the morally benighted world, and in this festival finding acknowledgment we are not called upon to describe. It is the weft of the world's history for the last 1800 years; exultingly traced by BOSSUET, quickly recognized by GUIZOT, and sowing with gibes the brilliant pages of GIBBON. Through the diffusion and vivifying power of this light our civilization derives its distinctive character. The great charters of our civil liberties, the elevation of woman, our schools, our live-breathing literatures, our noble achievements in medicine and surgery, and in the arts that "tend to the relief of man's estate," these are a few of the things which give the modern West its predominance over the older civilization of the East, and which may with much probability be traced to that recognition of the human element and side of our common Christianity, in virtue of which the incarnate Word in the cradle was made the object of special observance. It is interesting to think of the influence of this festival among the different European nations in the past, both of the Latin and the Northern races. Thoughtful writers have particularly dwelt upon the civilizing effects produced upon the fierce Scandinavians of early times, by the presentation in the blessed mother and her child, of purity and innocence appealing to their better natures. No where, perhaps, were these effects more obvious or remarkable than among those whom we are happy to regard as one of the ethnic stocks from which we derive our descent—the Germans. In regard to them even while they were heathen, TACITUS tells us that when they went into battle they chose that their women and children should be so near that their cries could be heard as an incitement to fortitude—that they regarded their testimony and praises as most precious—that treaties guaranteed by female hostages were held most binding, and finally that woman was looked upon by them as endowed with a certain sanctity and foresight (*sanctum aliquid et providum*). These statements of a Pagan historian cast a direct light upon the sentiments with which Christmas is regarded and celebrated in Germany and England, and to some extent among ourselves at the present time.

These were people peculiarly adapted to receive and appropriate, and be most widely and deeply influenced by the great divine and human Fact which Christmas commemorates. Those domestic tastes and affections which were their hereditary inheritance, thus received a consecration by which they were exalted and refined into a part of religion. Other things must not be forgotten, if we would appreciate this season as it was once looked upon and enjoyed by our forefathers. The inclement season of the north, the frost, its hail, its fogs, its deep snow, its stormy winds, must be remembered. Then we must remember that there were not the dead facts to us. The gloomy with its malevolent gods, and their mischievous agents, continued to haunt the imagination of the people for ages after it had ceased to live in the faith of reason." It is an attested fact that the rites of Odin were performed by the peasantry in the north of England so recently as the reign of ELIZABETH. It is thus easy to conceive the joy with which this season was hailed and celebrated by our fathers. No wonder that their hearts were filled with gladness, that enemies were reconciled, that the churl seemed to forget his nature for a few days, and that even the miser occasionally untied his prose strings. He whose birth they celebrated was the ruler of the elements, holding the tempests in the hollow of his hand, and invested with absolute power over those malign beings who were the general dread of old and young. All nature was believed to be pervaded by the influence of the great anniversary—by the return of the sacred season.

"And then they say no spirit dares stir abroad:
The nights are wholesome; then no planets strike,
No fairy takes, nor witch hath power to charm,
So hallow'd and so gracious is the time."

These superstitions have for the most part vanished; but Christmas ought to be to us also a hallowed and a gracious time; a season not merely of solemn memories and blessed hopes, but of urgent duties towards ourselves and others. It is particularly the season for realizing and rejoicing in the blessedness of Home; for feeling and thankfully owning by acts, if not in words, what we owe in this direction to Him who by deed and precept invested with new sanction and fresh sanctity all the charities of domestic and social life.

The worthy feeling in this direction must inevitably kindle the worthy feeling in another. He whom this day calls to mind as a child, when arrived at man's estate, by persuasive teaching, impressive allegory and contagious example enforced the truth that all men are brothers. He also irresistibly breathed into the world that spirit of active kindness, "that enthusiasm of humanity" or "new law of philanthropy" as it has been lately called, which must forever stand as a credential of His divine legation and divine work in the world, though it should appear that every precept in the sermon on the mount as well as every petition in the prayer he taught his disciples have been quoted from the Talmud. Those who have seen the heathen world will never sneer at or slight the benefactions of Christendom; but the time is probably still distant when there shall be no occasion for the rich to admonish themselves or be admonished by others as to the duty of giving.

THE SAFETY OF RAILWAY PASSENGERS.

The late terrible calamity at Angola, on the Lake Shore Railway, by which a whole car full of passengers were burnt up, and many others crippled, has been commented upon by all the leading papers in the country; and, as the direct cause of the casualty is unknown, various hypotheses have been suggested, mainly with a view to preventing such shocking sacrifices of life in the future, by having all the known defects in the management of our railway lines remedied as soon as possible. It has been alleged that the accident was caused by the breaking of a car wheel, and, as accidents from this cause are not uncommon, it is held to be the duty of railway companies to supply the cars with a row, like six fierce suns. Then black hills loom dimly up, with other rows of fires half-way up their sides; and there are similar fiery dots in the gloom as far as the eye can reach. This is wonderfully picturesque and excites the curiosity of the traveler to the highest point. He thinks that Pittsburgh must be at work behind those fires, naked to the waist, with hairy chests and faces, doing tremendous things with molten iron, or forging huge masses white hot, amid showers of sparks. No such thing. These rows of fires, of which scores can be seen at any favorable point, are merely the chimneys of coke-ovens, quietly doing their duty during the night, unattended. That duty is to convert the waste coal-dust at the mouths of the mines, where it has been accumulating for years, into serviceable coke. These are almost the only fires about Pittsburgh that are always burning, night and day, Sundays and holidays.

The approach to the city by day is far more remarkable. The railroad from Cincinnati, after crossing the Ohio several miles below Pittsburgh, has an arduous work to perform. Its general course is to follow the direction here of the river; but as the river is always bending into the form of the letter S, and carrying the hills with it, the railroad is continually diving under the hill to make short cuts. This is favorable to the improvement of the traveler's mind; for the alternations from daylight to darkness are so frequent and sudden, that he is apt, at length, to lay aside his book of suggestions, or give himself up to the contemplation of the November drizzle. This was our employment when the cars stopped opposite the point for which the nations are contending in France, England, the United States, and the "Six Nations." Was there ever such a dismal lookout anywhere else in this world? Those hills, once so beautifully rounded and in such harmony with the scene, have been torn down, sliced off, pierced, slanted, zigzagged, built upon, built under, until almost every trace of their former outline has been obliterated, without receiving from man's hand any atoning beauty. The town lies low, as at the bottom of an excavation, just visible through the mingled smoke and mist and every object in it is black. Smoke, smoke, smoke everywhere smoke! Smoke, with the noise of the steam hammer, and the spouting flame of tall chimneys,—that is all we perceive of Pittsburgh from the side of the opposite hill, the site of Fort Duquesne. How different the scene which the youthful Washington saw here a hundred and twenty years ago, when not a human dwelling was near, and scarcely a white man lived beyond the Alleghenies! Then a soldier's eye he marked the rushing Allegheny, the tranquil Monongahela, the winding Ohio, and the hills through which they flowed, only to report that the point of land at the confluence was the very place, of all others, for a fort. We have found better uses for it since. But these better uses have played havoc with the striking beauties of the landscape.

The two tributary rivers are spanned by many bridges, light but strong, some of which are of great elegance. Over one of them the train crosses the Monongahela, alive with black barges and puffing tug-boats, and enters soon the famous depot, the common center of all the great railroads meeting here. We visit it gaily by day, with large interest; the instruction and propulsion it once received from the East. New York has no such depot as this, though it has far more need of one than any Western city. We shall have to go to school to the West, ere long, and try to enlarge our minds and methods,—especially our methods of dealing with the long-suffering creatures, the public. Many thousand passengers daily arrive, are received, transferred, and distributed at this extensive depot, replete with every convenience, without loss of time, money, or temper.

The traveler arriving from the West is immediately reminded that, at this point, the West terminates. Neither the Western nor the Southern mind fully recognizes the existence of any sum of money between five and ten cents, and the Southern man considers it a proof of distinction that in his "section" there are no copper coins. In this depot, on the contrary, boys can be found who charge seven cents for a New York paper. In this depot there are barbers who demand the ten cents of face at the established, and who manifest some concern for the traveler's convenience and comfort. Many other trifling circumstances denote that we have reached a State where wakefulness and economy are instinctive; a State that is neither Eastern nor Western, Northern nor Southern, but constitutes a class by itself,—Pennsylvania,—square, solid, plodding, careful, saving Pennsylvania. There is no institution here of stuffing change into the pocket without counting it. There is no one here who does not know there are such sums of money as seven, eight and nine cents. Iron is not converted into steel bars so easily that the people who do it are disposed to throw away ever so small a fraction of the results of their labor. The other States of the Union do not know how to be liberal when there is occasion. During the war, no regiment, no soldier, passed through Pittsburgh without being bountifully entertained; and the Sanitary Fair held here yielded a larger sum, for the size of the city, than any other. The sum was very nearly four hundred thousand dollars. It is people who feel the utility of copper coin that can do such things.

From some of the expensive follies of human nature the people of Pittsburgh are necessarily exempt. There can never be any dandies here. It would be a very bold man indeed who should venture into the streets of Pittsburgh with a pair of yellow kids upon his hands, nor would they be yellow more than ten minutes. All dainty and showy apparel is forbidden by the state of the atmosphere, and equally so is delicate upholstery within doors. Some very young girls, in rush times, when wages are high, venture forth with pink or blue ribbons in their bonnets, which may, in highly favorable circumstances, look clean and fresh for half a mile; but ladies of standing and experience never think of such absurdities. They wear only the colors that harmonize with the dingy livery of the place. These ladies pass their lives in an unending, ineffectual struggle with the omnipresent black. Everything is bought and arranged with reference to the ease with which its surface can be purified from the ever-falling soot. Lace curtains, carved furniture, light-colored carpets, white paint, marble, elaborate chandeliers, are things never seen. Wherever either catches or shows this universal and all-penetrating product of the place, are avoided by sensible housekeepers. As to the men of Pittsburgh, there is not an individual of them who appears to take the slightest interest in his clothes. If you wish to be in the height of the fashion there, you must be worth half a million, and wear a shabby coat. You must be proprietor in some extensive "works," and go about not quite as well dressed as the workmen.

We will endeavor to describe without exaggeration the state of the atmosphere in Pittsburgh, as we observed it on the 6th of December, 1866. We select that day because it was the first perfect specimen of a Pittsburgh day at which we ever had the pleasure to assist, and it consequently made an impression on our mind. During the autumn they have about thirty such days as the one we are about to describe. Pittsburgh is proud of them. No other city can exhibit such a day. Pittsburgh amuses itself (when it can find a moment to spare) with the wonder which its characteristic and unapproachable day excites in the mind of the stranger. Let no matter how great, and in quarter acres of seam. It were well to know with certainty and exactness how long the Pittsburgh seam can keep it up at that rate.

To observe the whole process of getting coal out of the hills, it is only necessary to walk half a mile from the city. Cross one of the bridges over the Monongahela, walk up the hill that rises from the banks of that transient stream, and you behold, in the side of the hill, a round hole about large enough for a man to stand upright in. This cavity has smooth walls of coal, and there is a narrow railroad track in it. The air within is neither damp nor chilly, and often delicate flowers are blooming about the entrance. Strangers usually enter this convenient and inviting aperture, which may lead into the hill a mile, or even three miles. After walking a hundred yards or so, strangers usually think it best to go no farther. It is as dark in there as darkness itself, and as silent as a tomb. The entrance shows like a distant star, and the visitor listens for the sound of the pick-axe, or the rumble of a coal car; but nothing breaks the horrid silence of the place, and, retracing his steps, he sees with pleasure the point of light running into a round O. Reassured, he peers again into the mountain's heart, and discerns in the far distance a speck of light. This speck slowly, very slowly, approaches. A low and distant rumble is heard—the voice of a boy addressing an observation to a mule. The light, that was but a speck, begins now to disperse the gloom; and at last we discover that it is a lamp fixed upon a mule's head, and that the boy is driving before three car-loads of coal, and is driven by a perfectly black white boy, who also has a lamp upon his head. The coal is immediately dumped, the mule is attached to the other end of the train, and re-enters the black hole. A stranger who has a proper respect for his garments will hesitate to climb over into that exceedingly black car; but critical observers usually spread out their cycle, and there are travelers who will ride into the black bowels of the earth if they see an empty car going thither. Daylight comes again, and all things are distance! The round O of the entrance, after dwindling to a white dot, disappears quite, and it is long before anything becomes visible in the depths of the mine. As we passed along the black and narrow street—just wide enough for a car, and not high enough for a man to stand upright in the car—we observe openings like doors into black, empty rooms. These are "rooms," and as they are opened, from time to time, of course, is to make a straight passage into it; but on each side of the passage "rooms" are opened, one man being assigned to each, who cuts as much coal as he can during the day. The partitions left between the "rooms" keep the hill from settling down, and they remain intact until the seam is worked out. Then the partitions are cut away, and the coal removed. The hill is then only supported by upright logs, two or three feet thick, which, as the hill settles, are pressed slowly down and flattened out.

After a long ride in the car, signs of life appear; a switch, a fallen log, a light in the distance, and the click of a pickaxe is faintly heard. The train of empty coal cars stops at the door of a "room," and one of them is cast off, and pushed into the apartment by a turnout. The visitors alight as best they can, and find themselves in the coalest coal-hole ever known. Nothing is seen, felt or smelt, but coal; nothing is heard but the strokes of the pick. The miner, wielded by an unseen arm. The solitary occupant of this "room" is invisible at the moment when he is engaged in the operation of undermining the coal, by excavating convenient masses of that precious commodity, the first thing he does is to "bear in." To "bear in" is to get down your work and undermine. When a mass of coal is undermined, it is only necessary to wait a little, and it will fall of its own accord. Then the miner breaks it up with his pick, and shovels it into the car. Of course, the bigger the lumps the better. Coal, lying flat in the hills, uniform, compact, as though this region had once been a lake of liquid coal, upon which mountains had been tossed, pressing it solid. The thickness of the hill is, on an average, the better is the coal. It has had more pressure, is more compact and less impure. What this black stuff really is that we have named coal, how it got laid away so evenly in these hills, and why the stratum of coal is always found just so high up the hill, why coal is found here and not everywhere, and why it is better here than elsewhere, are questions on which much has been written and printed. We have read some of these answers and remain up to the present moment perfectly ignorant of the whole matter. The mere quantity of coal in this region is enough to keep all the forges, the foundries and iron works on earth could find ample room in this region, at the edge of a navigable stream, and have a coal mine at their back door. Pittsburgh is the point to which the gradies along the Monongahela river is only shovelled twice. Deep in the heart of the hill that rises behind the foundry the coal is mined and thrown down a shaft into the railroad cut at the mouth of the mine, and thence down an inclined plane to the foundry. The river is dumped at the door of the furnace which is to consume it. And, it seems, there are fifteen thousand square miles of "this sort of thing." The great Pittsburgh coal seam," as it is called, which consists of bituminous coal only, is put down in the books as covering eight hundred million of acres. Mr. George H. Thurston, of Pittsburgh, who is learned in everything relating to his beloved city, computes that this area contains a thousand million acres, and that a bed of bushels of workable coal, or fifty-four billions of tons. Supposing this coal to be worth at the mine two dollars a ton, and supposing that we could sell out the whole seam for cash, Mr. Thurston is as that we could immediately pay the national debt twenty-seven times over. He also remarks that it would take the entire product of the California gold mines for a thousand years to buy the coal of this one seam.

We fervently hope these statements are correct. What we need is, a grand National, or, rather, a Continental Survey, on the scale of the Coast Survey, to take an inventory of such natural wealth, that could be implicitly relied on. It is but thirteen years ago, that a writer in the "Encyclopedia Britannica," who seemed deeply versed in statistics, asserted that the whole of there was in the coal mines of Great Britain workable coal enough to last nineteen hundred years; and now a great man rises in Parliament, and startles the world by the assertion that the supply will be exhausted in a little over eighty years! If Mr. Thurston is right, and if Mr. Mill is right, the time is at hand when Sheffield, Birmingham and the other iron cities of England will begin to cast inquiring eyes at these hills and streams about Pittsburgh. If there is indeed a supply of bituminous coal in this region for many thousand years, we see no reason why Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington, New York, and fifty small cities, may not make their gas in the coal region and convey it across the country in pipes. The idea has been discussed, and there is talk of a company for carrying it into effect. This matter of the quantity and distribution of coal is of importance beyond calculation. There was one "tow" of coal sent down to New Orleans last year by a Pittsburgh house that struck a bar a little below Cairo, and a quarter of the cargo was thrown overboard to lighten the boat. Another tow of the same kind, and a quarter of the cargo will be thrown overboard, and so on, until the boat floats over the bar. Then the coal remains in the river, making its way towards Pittsburgh, while the barge is filled with water and sunk.

We were prepared to discourse wisely upon the subject of coal, as disclosed in the forty-foot made and squandered "in" it, and the healthy, proper way in which oil is now rising from the rank of a game to that of a business. We give place, however, to the editor of the Crawford *Journal*, (published in the oil regions,) who was related while we were at Pittsburgh a story which is worth more than preaching. An item appeared in the papers, recording the sale of a certain farm on Oil Creek for taxes. Being solicited from the editor of the Crawford *Journal* the following remarkable explanation:

"This farm was among the first of the oil-producing farms on Oil Creek. Early in 1860, Van Slyke well, on this farm, was struck, and flowed for some time at the rate of twenty-five barrels per day, and several wells yielding from two hundred to eight hundred barrels were struck at subsequent periods. Beside these, there were many smaller wells on the territory, though sadly mismanaged. It still regarded as among the best oil farms in the oil region. In 1865, McClintock died from the effects of burns received while kindling a fire with crude oil, and his widow, the average daily income from the landed interest of the farm was from two to three hundred dollars; and by her will the property, with all her personal estate, went without reservation to her adopted son, John Mc. Slyke, then about twenty years of age. A certain iron safe where the old lady kept her money was filled with one hundred and fifty thousand dollars, two-thirds of the amount in greenbacks, and the balance in gold and silver. The safe, however, was hardly cold in her coffin before young Steele, who appears to have been naturally vicious in his composition, was surrounded by a host of sycophants, all clamoring to him as long as he had a dollar remaining. The one hundred and fifty thousand was evidently turned by his good fortune, as has been that of many an older man who has come into his 'pile in oil'; and he was of the opinion that his money was inexhaustible. Two years and a half after his head was evidently turned by his good fortune, as has been that of many an older man who has come into his 'pile in oil'; and he was of the opinion that his money was inexhaustible. Two years and a half after his head was evidently turned by his good fortune, as has been that of many an older man who has come into his 'pile in oil'; and he was of the opinion that his money was inexhaustible. Two years and a half after actually thrown away, and throw it away he did. He had no business concerning his career in New York and Philadelphia, and he strongly advised that he would not be credited were they not so well authenticated. With a number of women, horses, fast and debauchery, soon made a wreck of that princely fortune, and when he died, in 1865, he owed more than a hundred thousand dollars. Hon. John Morrissey, M.C., is reported to have won at three games of faro one hundred thousand dollars in two nights; he bought high priced turnouts, and after driving them an hour or two gave them away; equipped a large minstrel troupe, and presented each member with a gold watch, chain and ring, and kept about him, besides two or three men who were robbing him day after day. Steele was killing the boon companions, but doorkeeper for Skiff and Gaylord's Minstrels, the company of which, and, as he says, a very expensive, but not strictly classical phrase—complete-ly played out.

"The wealth obtained by those who worked so assiduously for Steele's benefit soon took perfect flight from it to its possessors. The person most benefited by the transaction was the farmer, and the present condition of affairs was the notorious Seth Grover, who lung around this region for weeks last summer. He was worth at one time over a million dollars, and when he died he 'had a fortune' from Steele, and laid aside for a 'rainy day;' but when the latter's money vanished, this amount was drawn from its hiding place, and he died well known among his old associates as a 'dead beat.' At last accounts Steele was incarcerated in jail at a neighboring county for various breaches of the peace, and was unable to obtain bail for the sum of five hundred dollars. Exemplifications these of the 'Fools and their money are soon parted.'"

This is merely the most striking and best known of many similar instances. It is doubtful if ever money was suddenly acquired without merit on the part of the recipient, has ever been of real service; and we presume Johnny Steele did the best thing possible for him in getting rid of his fortune in the twenty months.

He might have staggered under the load for years, and even then had enough left to keep him from his proper place in the world. Happily, this is the case in the oil country, where the business languishes after the excitement of recent years, and is settling down to be a safe and legitimate pursuit, like coal, iron, and salt.

It is, however, the iron works of Pittsburgh that usually attract the stranger first, astonish him most, and detain him longest. We all know the precise quantity of "dirt" with each of his feet when he leaves the train, and with Mr. Gallagher. He begins work when he likes, works as fast as he likes, or as slow, and goes home when he likes. His "room" is his own against the world. He lays the product of his regular hundred bushels, which he usually accomplishes about three o'clock in the afternoon, he takes up his oil-can, lamp, tin-cup, dinner-pail, goes upon a load of coal, rides to daylight, and wanders home. When he has had his thorough Saturday afternoon wash, and has put on his fine Sunday broadcloth, he looks like a pale, muscular poet. The men who "work" for him are not the winds roughen it. He works in the dark, in a still air, and at a uniform temperature of about sixty degrees, the year round. If he has a family he owns a house, and is one of the proprietors about here once day coal at three-quarters of a cent per bushel. The people who live near the mines along the Monongahela are, as a class, pre-eminently well-to-do. They are proud, honest, and orderly. A few of them, on festive days, indulge in their native pastime of whipping their wives; but even this is one who delights in fighting a battle for nobler pleasures. The farmers say that their apples and watermelons are as safe here as anywhere. The miners are proud of their right to labor, and consider that their right is guaranteed by the Constitution of the United States, and generally send their children to school.

We asked "Mr. Gallagher" whether the practice of his vocation was attended by any danger, and he mused after a manner in perilous employments, he protested that there was no great danger, if a man was only careful. In proof of which he adduced the fact, that in this mine only one man had been killed in eleven months, and he was a boy who, while playing, fell and broke his neck. Horseback is a thick scale of remarkably heavy stone that is always found at the top of the stratum of coal, and which ought to fall to the floor of the mine, but will not. But masses of it often adhere to the roof of the mine, and cannot be dislodged without more labor than a miner is always willing to bestow. In almost every "room" of a mine, therefore, there will be heavy chunks of horseback clinging to the roof, which are sure to fall soon, and may fall at any instant. The solitary occupant of the room intends to avoid standing under these masses. He also intends to employ his first leisure in prying them off. But time passes; he forgets it; the heat of the work the overhanging peril, and some day the solitary worker in the next room notices that his neighbor's pickaxe has ceased to strike. Down there in the darkness, the earth, and a man working by himself, separated from his fellow by a wall of coal several feet thick, men acquire a strange power of knowing how it goes with their friends in the rooms adjoining. They can tell what they are doing, whether they are forward with their load or behind with it, whether the coal is working easily or hard, whether they are working merrily or dully, whether they are getting drunk or cross. The sudden cessation of all noise in a room, at the hour when work is going on, soon attracts attention, and the poor miner is found with his lamp and his life crushed out, under half a ton of horseback. This is said to be the only danger to the miners of the Pittsburgh Seam. If noxious gases are generated, it is easy to open a passage through to the other side of the hill for ventilation, or make a chimney through the roof. It is difficult to see how fifty or sixty billions of tons of coal could be put where man could get at them more conveniently. Sir Charles Lyell, who was in this region some years ago, and is particularly struck with the accessibility of this coal, and observed that he never saw anywhere else coal so easily worked and loaded.

The Pittsburgh district or coal region near Pittsburgh, is about thirty-five thousand, and seven thousand of these are employed in and about the mines. The annual product of the mines is something like millions and a half of tons, of which one third is consumed in Pittsburgh, and the rest is sent away down the rivers to fill the valley of the Mississippi with smoke. In one week of 1866, seven steamboats arrived at New Orleans, each subjected to a steady pull of fifty-eight coal barges from Pittsburgh, containing in all forty-five thousand tons of coal, worth at New Orleans three hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars.

As to that third part of the coal product of the great Pittsburgh seam which Pittsburgh itself consumes, it performs a prodigious quantity of work. Reduced to its simplest terms, it is only five pounds of iron in a year, and a Russian finds ten pounds sufficient. An Austrian is satisfied with fifteen, a Swiss with twenty-two, a Norwegian with thirty-three, a German must have fifty pounds, a Frenchman sixty, a Belgian seventy. Of the iron consumed in the United States, it appears that about one hundred and thirteen iron-works employ twenty-five hundred men, which has a coal mine at its back door and an iron mine on the other, which makes almost every large and difficult iron thing the country requires, which usually has "on hand" seven hundred thousand dollars' worth of finished work, is always ready to execute any order, whether it be for a bridge or a steamboat, and which would burst with only an ordinary charge. This error has been avoided since the English and American Government ceased to be afraid of bursting, and

Weekly Commercial.

1868.

THE PITTSBURGH COMMERCIAL.

DAILY AND WEEKLY.

A Paper for the Business Community and Household.

Presidential Year.

Now Is the Time to Subscribe.

It is unnecessary to occupy time or space in setting forth the character of the COMMERCIAL, as standing as the leading newspaper in Pennsylvania—although the most recently established of the first class papers of the country—already assured. At no time an experiment, has steadily grown in circulation, strength nd patronage, until it has become recognized verywhere not only as the leading journal in his State, but the favorite with the reading ublic in a large part of Ohio, West Virginia and even beyond their borders. It employs the telegraph on a scale equalled only y the great papers of the cities. As a COMMERCIAL PAPER it has a recognized tanding at home and abroad, and is read by he most intelligent of all classes, among hom it exerts an influence second to no other a the State. Its MARKET REPORTS are arefully prepared by competent reporters, nd we employ every means to insure ompleteness and reliability.

Republican in politics, the COMMERCIAL does ot scruple to be independent and criticises ovely the leading men of the party. Adhering rmly to the fundamental principles of that arty, it believes success is most surely chieved by freely discussing propositions and easures, with the view of assisting the reader o arrive at correct conclusions.

Entering, as we now are, on the Presidential ear, a preference for GEN. GRANT for THE RESIDENCY has already been expressed. In his respect, the COMMERCIAL was one of the rst to take a decided stand; and it has the satisfaction of having already seen its favorite he accepted of the great majority of the Republican party.

In State affairs the COMMERCIAL is the unflinching advocate of a FREE RAILROAD LAW and a LIBERAL SYSTEM OF IMPROVEMENTS for the development of the ast resources of our State, whereby she will be enriched and the welfare of her citizens adanced.

Our aim from the first has been to make the COMMERCIAL SECOND TO NONE AS A GENERAL NEWSPAPER. We leave nothing untried to accomplish this object. So well ave we redeemed our promises, that we deem t needless to make new ones in this or any other particular.

Terms of the Daily Commercial.

Daily Subscribers, (per year,) - - - $10 00
Delivered by Carrier, (per week,) - - - 25
Single Copies, - - - - - - - - 5

The Weekly Commercial

Is a large 36 column newspaper, containing few advertisements. Its ample columns contain a complete compendium of the news of the week, the leading editorials from the DAILY, and all the foreign and home markets carefully reported and corrected expressly for the WEEKLY up to the date of each issue. It is emphatically a Family Newspaper.

Terms of Subscription, in Advance.

One Copy, (one year,) - - - - $2 00
One Copy, (six months,) - - - - 1 00
In Clubs of twenty, - - - - - - 1 50
Office, Commercial Building, No. 76 Fifth street.
Address,
COMMERCIAL, Pittsburgh.

Pittsburgh Enterprise in a New Field.

The existence and purposes of the Keystone Bridge Company, of this city, is known to most of our business men. The company was formed for the purpose of constructing iron bridges for railways—which are found to be vastly superior to wooden structures, on account of their greater strength and durability, and their security against accidents. This company has just completed a splendid new bridge over the Cuyahoga river, on the Toledo Division of the Lake Shore Railroad, which is composed wholly of iron, and its combination of beauty, strength and durability challenges general admiration. The most improved plan of iron truss was used, and the structure is highly creditable, not only to the company itself, but to Pittsburgh skill and enterprise. On account of the narrowness of the channel, it was necessary to construct the bridge twice the length required to span the river. When the bridge is swung it extends along the west bank, a dock between three and four hundred feet having been built for that purpose. The total length is 308 feet, the span of the river being 131½ feet. The pivot is placed fifteen feet from the line of the dock, on the west side being inaccessible to that road. It was impossible to find a sufficient amount of clearance, and much of the ore for Pittsburgh was diverted to Erie.

These difficulties are all obviated by the new arrangement, the Cleveland and Pittsburgh Company having, during the past summer, purchased a large tract of land, which has hitherto been an utterly unproductive waste, along the "Old River Bed," and constructed nearly three miles of dock room.

The tracks have been laid across the bridge—one for the use of each company—for depositing thousands of car loads of coal upon the insufficient docks hitherto occupied, they by this means having new docks, and the cars will receive the cargoes of ore directly from the vessels. The opening of the coming season will mark a new era in the iron and coal trade of Cleveland, and it is confidently expected that the receipts and shipments of the rich wealth of the mines of Lake Superior and the coal fields of Ohio and Pennsylvania, will far exceed those of any previous year.

The Alabama Claims.

The announcement in the President's Message of the failure of the negotiations between the governments of the United States and England, for the settlement of the Alabama claims, has produced a deep sensation in England. The magnitude of the issues involved are generally understood in that country, and there is a manifest uneasiness upon the subject. There are probably no grounds for anticipating that the two countries will immediately or prospectively come to blows upon the question, but the difficulties are perplexing enough to cause some anxiety. Lord Stanley seems to take nearly the same views which prevented a settlement when Earl Russell was in the British Foreign Department.

The differences may be briefly stated. They originated on the basis of arbitration, to which both countries were agreed. The English Government positively refuses to submit to arbitration the question of the *right* of England to concede belligerent rights to the Southern States. Lord Stanley, following the example of Earl Russell, takes the position that England has the sole right to determine the *status* of combatant powers, and refuses, for reasons grounded on "self respect," to have this *right* passed upon by any other power. Thereupon, Mr. Seward writes to Minister Adams:

> We are now strictly informed by Lord Stanley's letter that the limited reference of the claims of *Alabama* claimants to arbitration for purposes, is tendered upon the condition that the United States shall waive before the arbitration, the position they have constantly maintained from the beginning, namely, that the Queen's Proclamation of Belligerency accorded belligerent rights to insurgents against the authority of the United States, was not justified either on the ground of necessity or of moral rights, and therefore was an act of wrongful intervention, a departure from the obligations of existing treaties, and without the sanction of the law of nations. The condition being inadmissible, the proposal implied in reference is therefore declined.

The point which Secretary Seward refuses to concede to England really embraces the whole position for which we contend. If England had a right to extend belligerent rights to the rebel States, the question of damages by the *Alabama* and other anglo-Confederate privateers, is narrowed down merely to a pecuniary point.

The new phases of the question will be looked for with interest. Mr. Seward has refused to go into conference upon the bases proposed by Lord Stanley. It remains to be seen what action will be taken by the English Government.

INTELLIGENT SUFFRAGE.

Letter from Senator Wilson.

The following is a letter from Senator Wilson to Hon. John C. Underwood, Judge of the United States District Court of Virginia, and one of the delegates to the Constitutional Convention at Richmond:

SENATE CHAMBER,
WASHINGTON, D. C., December 17, '67.

Hon. John Underwood:

MY DEAR SIR—I received your note yesterday, in which you ask my views touching the proposition to disfranchise all persons in 1877 who cannot read and write. If such a proposition is seriously pressed by any number of persons, they are doubtless influenced to it by the reading and writing provision in the Constitution of Massachusetts. That provision disfranchised no one; it secured the ballot to all who possessed it, and applied the educational test only to those who came of age or were naturalized after its adoption. If a proposition is to be put in your constitution of an educational test in 1871, to apply only to those who come of age at that date, or are naturalized, or take up their residence in your State, it would be in accordance with the oft quoted provision in the constitution of Massachusetts. Such a provision might be an incentive to young men of both races to better qualify themselves to the exercise of the elective franchise. But to take from tens of thousands of colored men to whom education has been denied, and to whom suffrage has been given, a right so essential to the protection of their lives, liberty and property, and to disfranchise thousands of poor white men who have never enjoyed the priceless blessings of common schools, would be a great wrong—a measure utterly indefensible. Poor laboring men, more than any other class, need the ballot for their security. Ignorance, if it be loyal, liberty-loving and just, is safer than intelligence that is unpatriotic, unjust and selfish. To-day, in all the possession of manhood suffrage shall have the ballot taken from him by my advice or with my consent, unless for crime.

When slavery, the public mother of all our woes, perished, and when the civil war ended, I hoped to see nothing done for revenge, but all for security. Heart, conscience and reason bade me strive to secure equal rights for black men, protection for the weak and forgiveness for the disloyal. It seemed to me to be a duty of patriotism, humanity, and Christianity to lift up the poor, secure the rights of the weak, and to forgive the erring. I hope our friends in your Convention, and in Conventions of other States, will indexably maintain the equal rights of all the blacks and whites, and deal generously with those who raised their hands against their country. It seems to me that the policy that shall securely hedge about and guard the civil and political rights of all, and deal mercifully and generously with our erring countrymen, shall be the policy to be striven, hoped and prayed for, when the bitter memories of the bloody conflict through which we have passed, will be forgotten in the common enjoyment of empire. America is equal justice, and in the general prosperity and common renown of our native land.

I am, dear sir, very truly,
[Signed,] HENRY WILSON.

A SPECK OF WAR.

Mr. Seward's Organ on the Alabama Claims.

The Washington *Intelligencer*, of Friday, has a very significant editorial upon the subject of the Alabama claims, supposed to be inspired by Secretary Seward. After showing that the negotiations had now reached a dead-lock, owing to the refusal of the British Government to submit to arbitration the propriety of that Government recognizing the Confederate States as belligerents as proposed by Secretary Seward, it says—

> "It is indisputable that the general feeling of Congress and the people is decidedly adverse to any adjustment on terms that will admit of the British pretensions on this subject. The late debate in the Senate, and the general tone of the press, show that no settlement under the American people will yield nothing, even for the sake of peace. But still it is plain that we are not to suffer by leaving the British policy and conduct an open question. It is for Great Britain to look to the results of her own obstinacy, and the wrong-headedness of her legal counsellors. These consequences have been pointed out in the recent discussion in the Senate, and they will be felt in British mercantile and commercial power most disastrous. We shall only be obliged in self defense, and, indeed, in vindication of national law, to adopt the example of Great Britain upon the occurrence of any war between her and any other power."

The Whisky Tax.

Commissioner Rollins has issued an order that the share of informers on the property liable to seizure having been found inadequate, it has been determined "to offer for information hereafter given that shall lead to the forfeiture of any distillery whose proprietor has not given the notice required by law to the Assessor of his district, and which information shall also lead to the conviction of any person engaged in operating the said distillery, a reward of three hundred dollars, to be paid upon the receipt of the certificate of the United States District Attorney having charge of the case that the person so claiming such reward is the person who furnished such information."

MRS. Hyman, wife of Spaff Hyman, an actor, was assaulted on Saturday night, about eight o'clock, at the corner of Third and Chestnut street, Harrisburg, under the full light of a city lamp, by an unknown man, who attempted to kill her. He first struck her in the mouth, cutting a severe gash on her upper lip. After she had fallen he struck her three different times on the back and side of the head with a heavy heavy knob slung-shot, cutting through six inches at the base, cutting through a thick woolen hood, and inflicting three terrible gashes of about three inches in length. On the approach of a couple of persons the villain broke up a dark alley and has not yet been apprehended. There is no doubt of his intention to commit murder. The woman became wholly insensible, and her flowing hair was dripping with blood. The whole affair is the murderous assault on women in the public streets of the capital within two weeks.

THE Boston board of trade, at its meeting, Monday, passed resolutions favoring the reciprocity treaty with the Sandwich Islands and the repeal of the cotton tax, provided such measures are now pending before the Senate, and also decided to call a commercial convention to meet at Boston, Wednesday, February 5th. Delegates will be invited from every board of trade and chamber of commerce in the United States, and the questions of currency, the transportation interests of the country, the depressed condition of our ocean commerce, the proposed, but a uniform measurement of grain, the organization of a national chamber of commerce, and other important topics, will be considered.

SAYS a New York letter: The urgent appeals the various charitable and benevolent associations are now making to the public furnish a striking picture of the distress at present prevailing among the poorer classes of the community. Those appeals represent that their resources are taxed in a way they never were before, and that the number of persons, families and individuals, absolutely dependent upon charity for the means of subsistence, is this early in the winter, is so rapidly increasing that it is impossible to say what is to be done with them.

SAYS a St. Louis letter: The Illinois and Missouri Bridge Company broke ground on the opposite side of the river, Friday, with the view of building a bridge across the Mississippi here; but owing to some irregularity, their proceedings were stopped by officers of Illinoistown.

The St. Louis and Illinois Company, which has been vigorously prosecuting the work on the coffer dam, on the foot of Washington avenue, for some time past, perfected its organization in St. Louis, Thursday, and will speedily commence operations on the Illinois shore.

HOOSAC TUNNEL.—Years ago, when the project of a route to the West through the Hoosac Mountain was first started, the late Rev. Thomas Whittemore, President of the Vermont and Massachusetts Railroad, was in the western part of the State, and an enthusiastic Tunnel man was urging the importance and feasibility of the enterprise. "Why," said he, "look at the route. It seems as if the finger of Providence has pointed it out." "What a pity," said the old minister, "*the finger hadn't been run through the mountain.*"

THE Government of the new Dominion of Canada has adopted a court dress, which gorgeous attire is described as consisting of "a tight-fitting dark blue body coat, with standing collar, and buttoned close down the front with gilt buttons, the collars and lappels covered with gold lace, and trousers of the same color, with a broad lace stripe down the sides. A sword completes the costume." The Privy Councillors were thus arrayed at the opening of the Dominion Parliament.

THE Cheyenne (D. T.) *Argus* learns that the telegraph line of the Union Pacific Railroad will be extended to Fort Sanders in the course of a week. The *Argus* also states that Wells, Fargo & Co. have recovered $8,000 in treasure which was stolen from the Lone Valley stage a few days ago. The highwaymen were also captured. They were two miners who had been working in the vicinity of Ione City, Nevada.

WORKMEN are busy fixing up the Halls of the Senate and House of Representatives, at Harrisburg, for the approaching session of the Legislature. Instead of the four large chandeliers formerly pendant in each house, there will be four large gas reflectors in the ceiling, which are capable of lighting up both houses more brilliantly than the old arrangements. Improved ventilators have been inserted, and several ornamental additions made.

SKATERS are, by a recent Yankee invention, to be made comfortable. A "warm skate" has been invented. In a slot in the skate-stock is inserted a square bit of soapstone, made red-hot in the fire. It retains warmth for some hours, and keeps the skater's foot in a comfortable condition—a sort of portable stove, which is handy and effective.

THE critics are making fun of Col. Forney's book of letters, which, after all, are as good as they make now on so short a notice. The Philadelphia *Post* concludes a trenchant notice of the work with the remark: "Considering the risks of foreign travel, and the number of books in the world, we hope that Col. Forney does not mean to travel again."

FINANCE AND TRADE.

TUESDAY EVE., December 24, '67.

There continues to be a pressing inquiry for money which is only partially supplied. A great deal of good paper is thrown on the outside market—which is at the present time a great support to borrowers—and capitalists are employing their spare balances in purchasing short date paper at rates which they dictate pretty much to suit themselves. Some offerings, however, that represent actual transactions between strong parties, sell at about 12 per cent., but the majority of paper brings from 15 to 18—the latter figure to steady and persistent borrowers.

SALE OF STOCKS.—Tuesday evening, December 24th, on second floor of Commercial Sales Rooms, 106 Smithfield street, by A. McIlwaine, Auctioneer: Pittsburgh and Connelsville Railroad Bonds 75 ₱ cent.

—The market for Governments has rallied. The New York *Commercial* says that the price of five-twenties at London is quoted this morning at 72 9-16@72¾. In prospect of the arrival of bonds from Europe, sixty-twos are borrowed more easily, and the price is weak. The growing ease in money has a tendency to strengthen the market, but on the other hand there is some uneasiness among holders at the rumored probability that a strong effort will be made to press through Congress the clause of the Senate bill providing for the conversion of legal tenders into bonds.

—Messrs. Ira B. McVay & Co., bankers, report the following quotations for governments, as received from Jay Cooke & Co., their New York correspondents:—U. S. 6s, 1881, 112¼; U. S. 5-20s, 1862, 108; do 1864, 105¼; do 1865, May and November, 105¼; do 1865, January and July, 108; U. S. 10-40s, 101¾; May 1865, Compounds, 117¾; August 7-30's ——; June 7-30s 104¾; July 7-30s 104¾; Gold, 133¾; 5-20s 1867, 108¾.

—Messrs. James T. Brady & Co., bankers, report the following rates for governments today:—U. S 6s, 1881, 112¼; U. S. 5,20s, 1862, 108; do 1864, 105¼; do 1865, 105⅛; U. S. 10-40s, 101¾; U. S. 5-20s, January and July, 1865, 108; do 1867, 108¾; June 7-30s, 104¾; do July, 104; May Compounds, 1865, 117¾; Gold, 133¾.

—The railway list is down again. Erie, particularly, has dropped materially. Ft. Wayne is steady and strong. The noon quotations to-day were as follows: Michigan Southern, 85; Cleveland & Pittsburgh, 87¼; Pittsburgh, Fort Wayne & Chicago, 99¼; Erie, 72¾; Chicago & Northwestern, 58½.

—A Philadelphia correspondent of Messrs. Samuel McClean & Co., bankers, advise them of a dividend declared by the Dalzell Oil Company, of two per cent., payable on and after the 27th instant.

—The German Insurance Company, of this city, announces a dividend of two dollars a share—about 8 per cent. on the amount paid up on the stock.

PRODUCE AND GENERAL MARKETS.

OFFICE OF THE PITTSBURGH COMMERCIAL, }
TUESDAY EVENING, December 24, 1867. }

A continued dullness prevailed in the general markets, but river navigation having been again opened, a considerable revival in trade is anticipated in most branches of business.

The free lists of some of the leading articles of produce per river and rail since our last were as follows: Flour, 685 barrels; cheese, 15 boxes; corn, 1,880 sacks; barley, 1,606 sacks; rye, 160 sacks; oats, 750 sacks; butter, 17 packages, and bulk meats, (loose) 1,227 pieces.

We quote as follows, which are the wholesale store prices unless otherwise noticed:

ASHES—We quote common soda ash at 4¾c; refined 5¾c and pearls 12¾c ₱ lb.

APPLES—Sales were made at prices ranging from $3 00@3 50 ₱ bbl, as to quality and quantity purchased.

POTATOES—From first hands we note sales of peachblow potatoes at 80@81 ₱ bush. Retail price $1 00@1 10 per bush.

BUTTER—Choice roll commands 35@36c ₱ lb.

EGGS—Receipts and stock light. We quote them in demand at 32@34c ₱ dozen.

RAGS—Trade moderate. We note sales of S. C. hams at 18c; ribbed sides 13½c; shoulders at 12c, and dried beef at 21c ₱ lb.

LARD—We quote at 13½c ₱ lb.

LARD OIL—There is a fair trade doing at $1 10 for No. 1, and $1 85@2 for extra.

CHEESE—Trade moderate at 16c ₱ lb for Western Reserve; Factory 17c; Goshen 18@19c; Hamburg 16c, and Sweitzer 20c ₱ lb.

POULTRY—Market well supplied and offered freely at 8@10c ₱ lb for dressed chickens; turkeys at 10@12c and ducks at the same price. Dressed geese were dull at 60c each by retail.

VENISON—By the whole carcass we quote at 13@ 15c, and by the saddle at 20@22c ₱ lb.

HAY—Timothy hay continues to sell from country wagons at $19@23 ₱ ton, as to quality.

WHEAT—Very little doing. Millers are paying for red winter $2 50@2 55 ₱ bush, and for white wheat $2 55@2 65 ₱ bush, as to quality.

BARLEY—We note sales of country lots by retailers at $1 55@1 60, and fall at $1 60@1 65 ₱ bush, as to quality.

CORN—Demand small with improved receipts of new. We quote new car from first hands at $1 05 and prime old shelled from Elevator at $1 15@1 20 ₱ bush, as to quantity purchased.

OATS—Market dull. From first hands sales were made at 85c ₱ bush, and from store at 87@90c ₱ bush, as to quantity purchased.

RYE—Demand moderate at $1 35@1 40 ₱ bush.

BUCKWHEAT FLOUR—We quote sales in bulk at $5 00 ₱ hundred, and from store at $5 25@5 50 ₱ hundred.

RYE FLOUR—Choice articles are selling from the mills at $8 75@9 00 ₱ bbl. Store prices are a little less.

FLOUR—Market quiet and without any particular change in prices. Good brands of flour are held firm. We note sales of 200 bbls Darton Snow flake at $12 50; 200 bbls Jenkins Lilly at $11 00; 100 bbls Oliver Mitchell at $10 75, and 100 bbls Star and Crescent at $10 50 ₱ bbl.

Groceries.

Old Government Java coffee is in request, with light stocks. Consequently the price rules high, while other descriptions are dull. We quote as follows:

COFFEE—Old Government Java, in bags, 37c; in mats, 36c; Laguayra, 29@29c; Rio, choice 25c; prime, 24c; good, 23c; ordinary, 22c.

SUGARS—Porto Rico, 14@14½c; Cuba, 13@14c; Sugar House, 11½@12½c; Granulated, 17½c; Powdered, 17½c; Crushed, 17½c; A Coffee, 16½c; B do, 16½c; C do, 15½c; New Orleans 15@16c.

MOLASSES—New Orleans, $1 00; Porto Rico, 70@ 80c; Cuba, 60@70c; Demerara, 85c.

SYRUP—Lovering's, $1 00; other choice brands, $1 00; fair to good, 90@95c.

TEAS—Young Hyson, common to finest, 90@95 @ 1 85; Imperial and Gunpowder, do, $1 25@2 00; Japan, 80@$1 25; Oolong, 90@$1 75.

RICE—Carolina, 9½@10c; Rangoon, 9@10c.

VINEGAR—Pure white wine vinegar, in original packages, 75c; common 23@25c.

FISH—No. 1 Shore Mackerel, $21; No. 2 Shore, $15; No. 1 Bay do, $21; No. 2 Bay do, $15; No. 3 large do, $12; No. 1 Salmon Herring, $5 75; White Fish, $6 75. Codfish, 9@9c ₱ lb.

SODA—English Bicarb 9c. American 8c.

SPICES—Pimento, 36c; Pepper, 36c; Cloves, 45c; Nutmegs, $1 60; Cassia, 40c.

SOAP—McKeon, Van Haagen & Co.'s Chemical Olive, 10c; Babbett's, 12c; Oakley's, 11½c.

LYE—Concentrated Lye, ₱ 80.

CANDLES—Proctor & Gamble's star candles, 28c for full weight.

INDIGO—Madras 90@$1 50; Manilla 90@$1 40.

BAR LEAD—12½c.

DROP SHOT—13c.

PITTSBURGH OIL TRADE.

OFFICE OF THE PITTSBURGH COMMERCIAL, }
WEDNESDAY MORNING, December 25, 1867. }

BUSINESS—The market since our last has undergone no quotable change; buyers appear cautious and not inclined to operate to any extent; the sales, in fact, for sometime past have been very light, principally to fill previous contracts. No revival of trade is looked for until after the advent of the New Year. Dispatches from Oil City, during the afternoon, report the ice broken up as far as Warren, Pa., and the river clear of ice, a number of light draught bulk boats are making ready to leave for Pittsburgh. There have been heavy falls of snow in the interior, and failing the weather being clear and cool. Oil in bulk was quoted dull at $2 10@2 20 ₱ bbl. Eastern dispatches furnish the following quotations: Philadelphia Dec. 21st—Crude 21@22c; crude in bulk, including packages, 15c. New York, P L 5 to W 22c; S W 23@23½c; crude in bulk 9c. In our market we are furnished the following operations:

REFINED—The market remains dull with a limited demand for export or for home delivery. The best offer for standard white, Philadelphia, January and February, was 23c ₱ gallon. The only sales were 100 bbls standard white, Philadelphia, 8 ₱, 22c; 200 bbls do. seller's immediate conditions.

CRUDE OIL—Was dull, the outside prices for spot oil being 6½c, the only sale reported being 300 bbls bulk, delivered at Saw Mill Run, at 6½c ₱ gallon.

Oil City Oil Report.

Special Dispatch to Pittsburgh Commercial.

OIL CITY, December 24, 1867.

Crude nominal at $2 10. River three feet and stationary. A number of loaded barges passed here to-day, *en route* for Pittsburgh. Weather moderate.

Cincinnati Provision Circular.

George W. Phillips, Jr., in reviewing the Cincinnati provision market for the past week, says that the market for hogs and provisions during the early part of the week was in a very unsettled condition, owing to the large receipts of hogs and prices materially declined, but towards the close the receipts were lighter and prices improved without any other visible cause. There is scarcely anything being exported, except lard, and that to a very limited extent. There perhaps has never been so few orders for the new stuff as this year, and packers are piling up their product in hopes of a profitable market in the spring, which is a doubtful problem, at the price now ruling, and being paid in at. The market closes quite firm to-day for hogs and green meats.

Hogs—The receipts to-day are 3,301; for the week $2,091, and for the season, since November 1, 267,490. The closing prices are under yesterday's—$5 25 to 7 00 gross, the latter being an extreme price for the best of hogs, and $8 00 to 8 75 net, but these extreme prices are being paid by hog speculators, rather than by packers, as they can see no inducement in the future to advance prices on the early part of the week. Green meats close rather firmer at 7@8c for shoulders and sides, with sellers demanding ¼c more for heavy. Hams are firm at 10½.

Mess pork—New is in fair demand at $21, holders generally asking $22. Old is dull with no buyers, yet holders are firm in their views and decline to sell under $20.

Lard has improved with buyers at 12½c for choice city and New Yorkers generally paying 12¾c for steam 12c. Head and gut 11½ to 11¾c. Gut 11 to 11½c.

Grease in fair demand at 8 to 10c, for the range of grades—brown to white.

Bulk meats—25 to 30 days in salt, in small demand; 6½ for rough, 7½ to 8c and 11 to 11½c, all packed, for shoulders, rib and clear sides.

Bacon dull. Old shoulders 9½ to 10c; new clear sides 12½c; old c r 12½c. New sugar cured hams 18c, uncanvassed but packed.

Hardware at New York.

The hardware market is very dull, even for this usually dull season of the year. No one seems to be busy, with the exception of dealers in skates, and other winter goods. There is no change to notice in quotations, but they are not to be relied on, as many manufacturers and dealers would sell for less than they are willing to quote. Stocks are generally moderate, but well assorted, manufacturers and merchants having been careful of late not to accumulate too many goods upon their shelves.—*Iron Age.*

PITTSBURGH MARKETS.... WEEKLY REVIEW.

OFFICE OF THE PITTSBURGH COMMERCIAL, }
THURSDAY, December 26, 1867. }

Pig Iron and Bloom Market.

We have to report an unusually dull business in crude iron. The near approach of the holidays induces consumers to restrict purchasers to their immediate wants.

Stocks of desirable grades of standard forge irons continue light, but in the absence of demand prices are weak, and sales of magnitude could only be effected through concessions on former rates. Superior grades of forge are not much wanted, and a further material concession has been accepted in order to effect sales.

Foundry irons continue in but moderate demand. Stocks of medium grades are accumulating and prices fully $1 00 ₱ ton lower than at date of our last report.

Bituminous Coal Smelted.

Both Vein and Mottled, favorite brands, delivered, $@2 50—60 days.
30 tons Open Grey, favorite brand,.... $1 00—4 mos.
100 tons Open Grey, favorite brand,.... 40 00—60 days.
120 tons Open Grey, favorite brand,.... 40 50—4 mos.
200 tons Open Grey, at furnaces,.... Private terms.
75 tons Open Grey, iron ore mixture,.... 40 00—30 days.

Charcoal.

50 tons Oliphant, C. B.,.....$32 00—4 mos.

Blooms.

50 tons Juniata,.....Private terms.

Glass.

Notwithstanding the low figures that have ruled for window glass for months past, there is but little demand, whilst stocks have been accumulating quite rapidly. A large number of furnaces have gone out of blast, and workmen will not accept the reduction of wages proposed. The probability is, that in this branch of our manufacture there will be a protracted lock-out, and hundreds of men with families dependent upon them, will suffer this winter. Eastern markets are full of *foreign glass*, and it is being forced upon the Western trade at full 15 or 20c less than it can be manufactured for here. In the absence of large demand, we continue our quotations of last week, say 25 to 50 per cent. off list prices.

Iron Bars and Nails.

It is gratifying to know that notwithstanding the unprecedented pressure upon manufactures throughout the country, that out of the thirty-five large rolling mills of this city at least thirty of them have been able to run their entire works uninterrupted by up to this time, and the others have only partially curtailed their production. This encouraging result is caused by the superior advantages which Pittsburgh possesses over all other sections of the country for manufacturing iron cheaply and the acknowledged superiority of its quality.

For a time during the war our iron manufacturers were unable to meet the demands of many of their customers, who were consequently compelled to purchase their supplies elsewhere. But the experience of these parties in other markets has been of such a nature as to lead them back to their old channels of trade.

While it is conceded that the margin for manufacturers of iron is small, it there be any, the existing state of affairs is much more desirable than that of 1865, 1866 or 1867, for even a general suspension of work on account of the conflict between the mill owners and workmen.

We understand that the employers and employees are working harmoniously and that there is no appreciable indication of a change.

It is believed that with judicious legislation on the part of the Congress now in session that the iron trade may be made fairly prosperous during the approaching year.

The card rates for iron are unchanged since our last report; 4c for bar sizes, but on good orders a concession of ¼@¾c ₱ lb is made from above rates. The stocks are ample for the demand.

We have been favored for our request at 4½, rates nett cash, with a limited stock.

Copper, Steel and Tin.

Since our last weekly review there has been no change in prices reported. We quote as follows: All kinds and sizes of tin plates and roofing I. C. and I. X. have been reduced 25c ₱ box.

Dry Goods.

Christmas and Christmas greetings are now upon us, and the thronged streets and crowded stores of our smoky city, in which the happy and interested faces of purchasers of Holiday gifts are passing to and fro, give evidence that cheerful thoughts are not entirely cast aside, despite the actions of Congress, the loud spoken opinions of advocates for and against specie payments and the various changes and exponents of political and financial theories, and that we can really give some thought to friendly plans and wishes for those around us. Venders of books, toys, jewelry, and in fact, the various articles of more sober worth, are busy as bees. The Holiday trade is in full flow, and the public are making their purchases with all proper diligence and to a reasonable extent. Retail dry goods dealers are having their share of the trade, and the various articles of seasonable goods are going into consumers' hands from their counters and shelves, and while we do not know that we can chronicle any extraordinary amount of business in excess of those of ordinary seasons, yet our dealers find themselves with stocks in comparatively good shape, and all classes of dry goods people find that the greatly decided change in the styles and fabrics of this kind have passed, so that they can now buy for their daily wants, without facing the possibility and probability of suffering from the changes of fashion. The sales before their purchase can be disposed of. Occasional declines are still encountered, but the jobber who buys sheetings at 14@c and prints at 12@c, knows to a certainty that he can pencibly suffer the depreciation that is constantly faced him while buying the sheeting at 60 or 70c and the print at 35 or 40c; and while in the still unsettled state of finance, taxation and manufacturing, the future is somewhat speculative, yet they are now beginning to assume something like a definite shape, and seem to be measurably within the reach and control of those who seek to do business with wise caution and prudence.

It is gratifying to know that prices in this branch of trade are lower in proportion than many others, and that as the year draws to a close and following our recent war, this line of prices has receded too fast—and yet while that may be the case, we feel certain that the present basis of values will less most sooner or later take proper place in regard to the future.

Trade for the season is over, and within a few days the usual annual inventory will be made and taken and the figures of the merchandize account of our dealers will reveal the result of the twelve months' business. As of late, we have been in the changes, not great indeed at any one time, and not almost perceptible, we do not accept the notion that profits will be large, but those houses that have got the market and have supplied it as best they with goods at market value without regard to cost, will find the time approaching in which the cash and steady trade of our city can be done with satisfaction and comfort.

The vicissitudes of the past five years have been exceedingly interesting, though not without vexation and loss, and those who have come out of the ordeal may now profit by the experience of the past and should be able to successfully manage their affairs in the coming season. We think it safe to say that the turmoil of our nation's struggle and strife,

The unsettled condition of our currency, and not the least interesting one is that of finance, especially that of the past year, have had a powerful effect, and continues at its present utterly unreasonable height, to cripple the energies of our business men, and is calculated to annoy and depress business operations. The newspapers of the day are filled with arguments for and against specie payments, and the question will may be presented, and while one financier would advocate the measure, another would point out the trouble of this kind, is through another sea of trouble, and the next one cries out for specie payments at once.

Congress should certainly do something if possible to give relief, and some additional legal tender or credit and ought to decide that the principal and interest of the bonds shall be paid in gold, and that as to a reasonable man can claim that anything else was contracted for, and that we should open our eyes to it urged that under advantage was taken of our great distress, and that we had a hard bargain to meet or not. This may be the case in some cases, but what would be our position in the event of an adverse decision? Let us be honest, and if we have to try our credit if we now say to those who hold our bonds, "You must take gold or wait," we shall be safe. We can't pay in the manner you wish."

The case is entirely changed, and it is the only rational presumption of value and the sooner we compress its stamp upon our national securities the better, and the sooner will we be on a par with the world in the same way, the better.

The Holiday trade is "on to Richmond;" was the watch word at the time the words were written, and the proof of the pudding is in the eating, as the old saying is urged by it now, to the true position for us to take. We cannot expect this change to be made without some suffering, but the true position of many of our citizens, but we hold it to be the duty of our representatives to do all in their power to relieve the country from its present position and therefore urge it at once.

The true position is emphasized for us in the event of immediate resumption is almost entirely imaginary, as the certain fall in gold would be so great as to be ruinous to the holders of it, and this article would consider himself ruined if he were obliged to sell his gold under par, and the country in addition, while another would think himself most wonderfully fortunate if he could only sell his gold at par and family half so good a home. While our business men are struggling in the interior of the fields of the Middle and Western states, the boundless mineral wealth of our mountains, and the immense forests of timber, and the agricultural wealth all ready for willing and industrious hands to seize upon, ruin is impossible. The crowded manufacturing cities and towns of New England, the thronged and packed streets of Philadelphia, New York and Boston, while clever and consequent Jacobean monarchies, must indeed be in a deplorable state, if they do not need to, but the young men of our country, with the material within their reach can fashion for themselves a home in the west which will be to them one generation. We hold the position of a business man to be that of a soldier, and that he must be willing to remain at a discount only for the shortest possible time, and we should resume specie payments within six months. Our national credit has been too long out, and we should, and have abundant means and capital to make it certain that this theory can be put into successful operation. Prices are unchanged from those reported last week.

Manilla, Hemp, Ropes, Oakum, Etc.

Cordage, in the various grades and variety manufactured in Pittsburgh than at any point west of New York. The manufactory of Fulton, Bollman & Co., was established by Jno. Irwin & Co. in 1796, and has a capacity to manufacture 8,000 lbs Manilla per annum; 2,000,000 lbs of rope; 2,000 bales American hemp, and 12,000 bales of oakum—and are the only Manilla manufacturers west of the mountains. The principal article of manufacture is large cables for the coal trade. Here are manufactured cables in length of coil 1,200 feet, whilst in New York the length is but from 1,100 to 1,200 feet. There are now in the United States 1,500,000 bales of 250,000 bales of Manilla worked up, and price of cordage has averaged during the past year 22 cents. There are but 12 extensive cordage factories in the United States, and the prices are uniform—the same fact as here—with additions of freights to the different points. Gerwig & Co. are manufacturers of American hemp cords and extensively engaged in making twines which will compare favorably with any made in the East. Their tax twines have a better finish, with prices the same as in New York. Beckert & Co. and Flocker & Co. are old establishments, and principally engaged in manufacturing American hemp into hand-sewed, tarred rigging, packing, &c.

Pittsburgh can supply the trade with as fair a quality of rope, twines, spun, hay and lath yarns, packing, tarred ropes and rigging and oakum as New York, at the same prices, with difference of freight. There is no occasion for the West to pass Pittsburgh for goods of this kind, when they can save both time and freight. The cordage trade here, however, depends to a great extent upon the condition of western navigation. During last spring and part of the summer, the river being navigable and high, the manufacturers could not keep up with the demand, the rivers being dried up, the demand has been rather dull. For rigging should open low it would require a very large quantity of rope to let out the coal now ready. There has been a reduction of two cents per pound on Manilla cordage, and on Manilla hawser laid oil well rope.

Leather and Hides.

From George H. Anderson & Co., dealers, we learn that all kinds of leather moves slowly, manufacturers buying nothing beyond their immediate wants. As the year closes, and time for settling accounts, taking stock, &c., draws near, a revival in the fall of in trade is a natural and healthy event. Prices of rough and finished stock are a trifle lower; yet with no superabundance of prime leather on the market. Hides, at prices ranging 1@2c lower, are being more actively sought after, tanners well knowing the superiority of hides in market at this season. From all indications in the hide and leather trade, prices have touched bottom, unless some unforeseen circumstance occurs in the departments of business. We quote as to-day's wholesale prices for

Rough Ox,.....	35@36c ₱ lb.
Slaughter Ox, Side Sole,.....	40@44c ₱ lb.
City Oak Harness,.....	44@46c ₱ lb.
Country Oak Harness,.....	40@44c ₱ lb.
Belts,.....	60@ 63 ₱ lb.
Russet Skirting, best,.....	60@65c ₱ lb.
Russet Bridle, best,.....	$5 00@5 50 ₱ doz.
Kip Skins,.....	25@28c ₱ lb.
Wax Calf City,.....	$1 80@1 90 ₱ lb.
Hemlock Calf, Buffalo,.....	1 60@1 70 ₱ lb.
Oronoco, Red Sole,.....	29@33c ₱ lb.

Hides.

Green Salt Cured,.....	12@12½c ₱ lb.
Green City Butchered,.....	8@8½c ₱ lb.
Green City Cut Butchered,.....	10@10c ₱ lb.
Green Salted Calf, Cured,.....	22@23c ₱ lb.
Dry Flint, middling to good,.....	20@22c ₱ lb.

MISCELLANEOUS.

The hardware trade is dull and unchanged—if we except sleigh bells, for which there is an active demand. The lumber trade is dull on account of the cold weather. There is a fair business doing in brick, in fact all operations, owing to the near approach of the holidays, the markets for connections, foreign fruits and nuts, has been very active, with a good stock of all descriptions on hand. In regard to other articles of trade, prices are unchanged and market generally dull.

IRON AND NAILS.

OFFICE OF

Weekly Commercial.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 28, 1867.

TERMS:

One copy, per year.....$2 00
In clubs of twenty, per year.....1 50
One copy gratis to the getter-up of the club.

THE HOLIDAY SEASON.

The holidays are at hand again! And merry let them be, say we to our readers as we greet them once again in the season of the Yule and the Mistletoe.

For more than fourteen centuries Christendom has agreed to consider the twenty-fifth day of December as appropriate for the purposes of its memorial of the day

"When Christ was born of Mary free
In Bethlehem, in that fair city:
And angels sang with mirth and glee
In the highest, glory!"

It was early seen to be fitting that the birth of Him who was given to man as the deliverer of the races and as the mysterious link connecting the transcendent and incomprehensible Deity with humanity, its nature, sympathies and affections, should have its annual return commemorated with due solemnities and jubilant celebrations; and Christmas through the passing ages has come down to us as among the most venerable of the periods marked by the events of the Evangelic history. The disputes which have arisen as to the exact season of the year in which the first advent occurred, and the uncertainties which in the absence of positive historic data are found in determining with certainty the precise day upon which the nativity took place, are matters which may trouble the brain of the learned Thebans, who delight in the mysteries of Chronology; and may, "an't please them," form the subject, profitable or otherwise, of acrimonious wrangling among the critics; but the great heart of Christendom "will care for none of these things." The followers of JESUS will, despite these disputings, abide in the faith that at some season in the year, upon one of the nights of one of the years of that golden age, "a son was born" in the city of DAVID, and laid in the manger: that in the starlight and stillness, shepherds, in one of the pasture valleys, which perchance, in earlier years the feet of DAVID had traversed, listened in wondrous amaze and rapt awe to the song of the Angels, who exulted as the home of poverty was gladdened by the coming and presence of Him, whose glad tiding were afterwards to be forever the light and joy and comfort of the lowly dwellings, and the special inheritance and blessing of the poor; and no shadow will fall across the threshold where the holiday is being kept, where the feast is being prepared, and where the gladness of a thankful heart is making merry in the freedom from care, the cessation from toil, and the gatherings of the household; where blithesome childhood is counting the gifts, and dancing in the exuberance of its joy over the beneficence of "Krisskingle," or the gifts of "Santa Claus," because some grave doctor may shake his philosophic head and pronounce with all solemnity his opinion that June, not December, is the month when the World's Redeemer came. And of these disputings and doubtings the "merrie multitude of younglings" who scamper along the streets and highways, and hail each passing friend for their yearly tribute, know as little as they would care; and their jubilant glee, the universal exuberance of joy, the gladness which irradiates the cheek, which flashes the sparklings from the eye, which rings out its laughing voice upon the cold wintry air, which thrills through the pulses and makes the heart leap, which makes the very fingers to tingle and the feet to course nimbly along the paths,—all these make the very soul rejoice that this festival has never been crushed out, and its blithesome sports and joys discontinued. What if the festivities of our Christmas time are a medley of Christian and Pagan rites, if Scandinavian and Teutonic, the Roman and the Druidic, have been transformed to serve the purposes of its festivity, have become in the gladness of the day associated with the memorials which have their real origin in the nativity at Bethlehem, and are by them in greater or less degree controlled and directed? Thus there is exhibited the universality of that love which is inherent in our nature for those things which give scope for the exercise of the activities of the sunnier attributes of our humanity; and there is shown all the more vividly the power and vitality of the religious system and civilization which became possible by the advent of the Lord of all coming centuries, and which can thus permeate with its own happy spirit and transform to its own purposes of gladdening and ennobling life all that it touches or holds.

And so then let the bells ring our merry chimes! Let voices of cheer and salutations of gladness—the gifts of kindness and of blessings abound. Let the fires burn brightly, and happy eyes look upon the red coals as they send out their warmth upon the clustering family gatherings. Let the rich not forget the poor, nor the poor be envious of the rich.

"Now let our neighbors' chimneys smoke,
And Christmas blocks be burning;
Their ovens they with baked meat choke,
And all their spits be turning.
Without the door let sorrow lye;
And if for cold it hap to die,
We'll bury 't in a Christmas pie,
And evermore be merry."

Let the "Yule," as it was wont in days of yore, completely consume as it burns all the strifes and bickerings, the animosities and differences of the year past. In the Christmas carol let there be the glorious angel-song, "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good will toward men." And let the actions of the life—its deeds of benevolence and of kindness, of mercy and of love—be the grand music to which it shall be set, and to which it shall he sung in the ears of the happy people. Let the Ghost of the dead Marley's, with the clanking chains which they have forged, appear to the living Scrooges, and so let them see the visions of Christmas Past, Present and to Come, as to be transformed by the lessons of the Spirits into those whose names shall be household words of honor; whose presence shall be ever welcome, and whose munificence shall every where scatter blessings.

"God rest you, merry gentlemen,
Let nothing you dismay."

"A merry Christmas to us all, my dears, God bless us!"

Let readers and writer re-echo.

And last of all, as he sits on his little stool close to his father's side, with his withered little hand in his and his crippled limbs upon the iron frame, as he remembers on this Christmas "who made lame beggars walk, and blind men see," lifting up his pale, thin face let Tiny Tim, from the depths of his loving heart, and with the melody of his sweet spirit, say, "God bless us, every one."

TO INSURE HONESTY.

The Manufacturers' Convention last week did nothing more to the point than when it took ground in favor of a law whereby applicants for Revenue offices must go before a Board of Examiners, to have their capacity, honesty and general qualifications inquired into. This suggestion was made in the COMMERCIAL months ago and has been repeatedly urged since. It will be a happy day for the country and the tax-ridden people when this system in selecting officers becomes the ruling one. Competent and faithful men in office is something to strive for, and the party that goes to work determinedly to bring it about will gain a thousand times more strength with the people than the possession of the offices which would be lost by a non-partizan system of making the appointments would confer. There is a great deal that is thoroughly bad and corrupting in the squabble for office which takes place every four years, to say nothing of the intermediate bushwhacking. In our judgment, the only consideration should be fitness; and whoever, after a rigid examination, obtains an office should, as a rule, hold it so long as he lives up to the high standard prescribed. The Board of Examiners would be a very important body. It would fix the character of the civil service. It is only by the most rigid scrutiny that the character of the Army and Navy is kept up. A no less rigid scrutiny should be instituted in every other branch of the Government and an equal degree of responsibility should be exacted in the performance of every duty in every office. We are loath to believe that as much honesty as human nature is capable of furnishing cannot be infused into every branch of the public service; and we thank the Manufacturers' Convention for the stand it took in favor of a rigid examination of every applicant for office in the revenue service. With equal propriety the recommendation might have been made universal.

THE ALLEGHENY COUNTY PRISON SOCIETY.

In a recent article on the subject of our penitentiaries, we made a remark which has created the inference that we ignored the existence of the Allegheny County Prison Society. We are well aware of the existence of this Society, and cordially commend its purposes; but it has not yet fully organized—or rather, it has not secured the services of a sufficient number of gentlemen who have a proper interest in and taste for the work of prison reform. Of those who at first entered upon the work, some found it distasteful from the beginning, and had to abandon it at once; others continued for awhile, but finally ceased to act, mainly from want of time. The Society, however, is still active, is accomplishing a great deal of good, and is preparing plans for future action, which it is hoped will be productive of still greater results. The Acting Committee has been made official visitors of all the prisons of the county, which greatly facilitates their labors. By the first of January they expect to have an Agent in the field, who will devote himself wholly to the work of ameliorating to condition of prisoners. If the Society receive the sympathy and co-operation of the humane and benevolent in our midst, they expect to present facts to show that convicts and outlaws are being reclaimed, and restored to society as good and industrious citizens The Society even now have men of this class filling useful positions with entire satisfaction, who have become members of churches and workers in Sabbath Schools, and who have hearts burning with love for the members of the Society. Notwithstanding these encouraging facts, the Society have encountered obstacles which they are desirous to overcome. They have ascertained that, in consequence of adverse legislation—as it seems to them—insane persons, charged with the higher grades of felony, and who may be acquitted by reason of insanity, cannot be sent to Dixmont. This regulation operates very seriously against a considerable number of insane. As an instance, there is now in the county jail a man named MAHONEY, who has been acquitted of the crime of murder by reason of insanity, and who cannot be sent to Dixmont because the doors have been barred against him by the legislation above alluded to. MONAHAN, the train wrecker, is in the same situation. These men must remain in the county jail for an indefinite period, unless some action is had by the Legislature in their behalf. The Court is powerless in the premises, as men of that character cannot be turned loose upon society. The poor-houses are unfit for the treatment of such cases, and as the only place designed for them has been closed in the manner we have stated, the only alternative is to leave this unfortunate class to the miseries of the county jail. Why such legislation was obtained—what necessity prompted it—others can perhaps explain. It does not accord with our Christian civilization, however, to have any class, however small, excluded from the benefits of our humane and charitable institutions, and especially to proscribe any who are bereft of reason.

We subjoin a communication relative to the work of the Prison Society, and commend its suggestions to the careful consideration of our readers:

To the Editor of the Commercial:

SIR: In the COMMERCIAL of Wednesday you have some observations upon "the question, 'Are Penitentiaries reformatory institutions?'" With the general scope of these observations I entirely agree. They suggest, very properly, the consideration that may well prevent any feelings of discouragement, when reading the testimony of Dr. Campbell, Warden of the Western Penitentiary, as given to the New York Commissioners, "that very little evidence of reformation is given by convicts, either before or after their discharge." What the results of our American Penitentiaries are not up to public expectation on this head, "you have undoubtedly indicated in at least one most important point, when, in contrasting the Irish system with ours, you say: 'Our leading feature of the Irish system is almost entirely neglected in ours. We allude to the gain which attaches to a diploma and encouragement to the convict to persevere in habits of industry after his final discharge from imprisonment.' Eastern Penitentiary, at Philadelphia, has its discharged convicts cared for by a voluntary association in that city. Until something of this kind is done here, it seems probable the leading idea of penitentiary confinement will not be realized, whatever system be adopted."

Now no reason is objected to, in addressing you, is to call your attention to the fact, that just such a voluntary organization as you mention exists in this city more than a year ago, and has been pursuing its work, not without encouraging results, though with means very limited, ever since. I inclose you a pamphlet containing the "constitution, &c., of the Western Penitentiary Aid Society," which was given to me by one of the gentlemen of the Acting Committee, and venture to hope that you will be well pleased to find that so good a work has been begun, and that you will bring the potent agency of the press to help it forward to greater efficiency, more adequate means, and wider usefulness. The gentlemen I have referred to gave me a detailed account of some cases in which they have the interesting fact of the benevolent efforts of this infant society, much good has been done in "affording employment and encouragement" to discharged convicts. I am, &c., M.

THE COMFORT OF RAILWAY PASSENGERS.

The management of railways in the United States is susceptible of great improvement, not only with regard to securing the safety, but likewise the comfort of passengers. It is granted that the safety of passengers from injury and death should be placed above every other consideration, but even this important matter is sadly neglected on many roads. It is with reference to the comfort of passengers, however, that we design speaking at present. It is conceded that railway companies possess and should exercise a reasonable discretion in the management of trains, but this discretion should not only have in view the profit and interests of the companies, but also the convenience and comfort of passengers and shippers, by whom the companies are sustained. Suitable depots and station houses are indispensably necessary, and some of our roads are very negligent in not providing these. Station houses for the accommodation of passengers are scarcely ever erected as soon as required, and some of the railway companies exhibit a very niggardly policy in reference to this matter. Mere "watch boxes" are provided, and these are kept in the most filthy and dilapidated condition, until the people, by persistent petitioning and "praying," sometimes force a compliance with their reasonable demands. The neglect to build suitable station houses is a "penny-wise and pound foolish" policy, and retards the business and prosperity of the roads. Passengers are also entitled to the use of comfortable cars, with all the improvements which modern skill can suggest. Some of the roads are lamentably behind in this respect, furnishing cars of a very indifferent character, and yet charging as much fare per mile as any other company. The management of trains is a very important matter, and improvements might be made which would greatly conduce to the benfit of travelers. The right which companies reserve to classify their passengers is a proper one, but it is frequently exercised without due consideration, and leads to very serious discontent. In this country, where money and dress are no indices to social standing or respectability, anything like special favors or preferment, where all are upon a perfect equality as to rights, is severely condemned, and justly so. It often happens, too, when good judgment and sound discretion are wanting in those who have the charge of trains, the most unwarrantable distictions are made. We have ruffians as well as gentlemen in broadcloth; and we have gentlemen as well as rowdies in homespun. We have ladies in calico, and those who are not ladies in silks, and hence the classification becomes a very difficult and delicate matter—so much so, indeed, that it might be well to abolish it altogether, and substitute instead the rule of giving each man and woman the privilege to choose a seat wherever one may be found vacant. All who have traveled on railway trains have observed that, in the winter season, scarcely any attention whatever is paid to the temperature of the atmosphere. Often times on entering a car the passenger is almost stifled with heat, and before he reaches his destination he may be suffering from cold. It is admitted that the atmosphere of a railway car, in motion, cannot be kept at an even temperature, as in a parlor, but the extremes of suffocation and freezing might be easily avoided. Brakesmen should at least be prohibited from making the stove red hot every time they come in from the platform, and spitting tobacco juice over it while they remain. The temperature of the cars is an important matter, and ought to receive more attention at the hands of trainmen. The subjecting of passengers to annoyance from peddlers, beggars, etc., is one of the most serious faults of railway companies. Mendicants of all kinds are permitted (and doubtless for a consideration paid to some one) to enter the cars and relate their "tales of sorrow," either orally or by card, and play upon the sympathies of passengers. This begging on railways is reduced to a system, and it is astonishing to see how quickly a sharp operator, even without eyes, can "pluck" a whole train, and retire with a pocket full of "stamps." Then comes the vendor of "yellow kivered" literature, who piles your lap full of the vilest stuff that ever issued from pen or brain, and asks you, in a short, piercing, impertinent tone, to buy his wares. The passenger has scarcely got rid of these caterers to the intellect, when in pops a representative of another class—those who supply the stomach. He is anxious to appease your hunger with pop corn, cream candy, or gum drops, at the rate of twenty-five cents per ounce. Then comes the "confidence boy," with his big envelopes, containing a hundred and one articles of value, and "all for a quarter." Thus one nuisance follows close upon another, and if the passenger is so unlucky as not to have had his eye teeth cut, he will find himself entirely out of "fractional" by the time he reaches his destination. The article most sought for by the traveler—the daily newspaper—is generally kept back until the market for trash has been exhausted, or perhaps not offered for sale at all. The reason of this is, that there is a greater profit made on the *Police Gazette*, and publications of a similar character; and, if the daily papers were offered first, there would be less demand for the vile and corrupting literature of the day. Whatever discretion may be reserved to railway companies, in the management of their trains, they have no right to subject their passengers to annoyance and pillage in the manner indicated, and especially to permit ladies and gentlemen to be insulted by having vile papers and periodicals thrust into their faces. That company will take a step in advance, and swell its receipts also, which adopts a rule abolishing all begging and dickering on its trains. Passengers are entitled to protection from all petty annoyances, and have a right to the highest degree of comfort and convenience which it is in the power of the companies to bestow.

COAL FOR FUEL AND GAS.

The fact that there has been a threatened famine in the coal market in nearly all the cities and villages along the Ohio and Mississippi rivers, renders it appropriate to present some suggestions on the coal beds which supply this vast region with this prime necessity of life. A large quantity of fuel is obtained from other sources, yet the facts, prominently called to every reader's attention within the last month, show that when the supply of what is known as Pittsburgh coal in these markets is cut off, the supply from all other points is entirely inadequate. At Pomeroy and other points in that vicinity, on the Ohio river, coal is mined to a large extent; and in the vicinity of Hawesville, Kentucky, and Cannelton, Indiana, another series of coal veins, belonging to the Illinois coal basin, outcrop. Although these series of coal beds, the first, some one hundred and fifty miles above Cincinnati, and the others about the same distance below Louisville, are so much nearer these heavy consuming points, the supply from them falls largely below the amount of Pittsburgh coal consumed in either of these markets. These Ohio river mines furnish a lighter, dryer, fast burning coal, valuable for many purposes, but not at all equal to Pittsburgh coal for domestic consumption. Hence the markets along the Ohio and Mississippi rivers are mainly supplied with coal from this vicinity. We have not at hand the annual shipments to the ports below, passing over the works of the Monongahela Navigation Company. These, however, do not fall below one million of tons, or twenty-six millions of bushels annually.

Western Pennsylania also furnishes to the markets East and West of us, almost all the coal used in the manufacture of gas. Within the last week we heard a remarkably well posted dealer in gas coal say he had never forgiven Senators COWAN and BUCKALEW for not correcting the New England Senators who, in the discussion on the last proposed modification of the tariff, urged repeatedly in debate, as a reason for admitting Nova Scotia and foreign bituminous coal at a nominal duty, that this country furnished no good coal for the manufacture of gas. Whereas, a portion of the Pittsburgh coal seam, traversed by the Pennsylvania and Connellsville Railroads, and by the Youghiogheny and Monongahela Rivers, furnishes the best gas coal in the world. We have already several large operators engaged as their specialty in the mining of gas coal, and they are quite prepared to supply all demands, from either the Eastern or Western market.

It is remarkable how indispensable the coal mines of Pennsylvania have become to the balance of the Union, in affording fuel and gas coal. Not a city along the Atlantic sea coast could for six months dispense with the anthracite coal of Eastern Pennsylvania, and recent experience has shown that the cities of the West are greatly dependent on our supply of bituminous coal. So, too, both the East and the West are dependent upon our gas coal for their supply of this indispensable article in the production of light. The Pennsylvania coal operators and miners are equally dependent upon this outside demand. We congratulate both parties that the present rise in the rivers will afford about equal relief to the coal producers of our own State and the suffering dependents upon our fuel in every Western city.

STATE REVENUE CASES IN COURT.

This week has been set apart before his Honor, Judge PEARSON, at Harrisburg, to dispose of a large number of appeals which have been taken by corporations from the decision of the Auditor General taxing them. One of these involved the right of the Legislature to tax coal shipped on the Monongahela slackwater to ports outside of the State. The Monongahela Navigation Company has been collecting the tax under protest, and withholding the same until the constitutionality of the act is tested. Judge PEARSON, in a former case, has decided against the right of the Commonwealth to impose this tax on tonnage shipped out of the State.

There are several other cases in which parties from this section are interested. Some of these are what is known as double taxation on corporations. The Auditor General has taxed oil and manufacturing corporations under what is called in the Auditor's Report corporation stocks, and also, under the recent act of 1864, three per cent. on net profits, making in the aggregate what the companies believe an enormous tax. The whole number of appeals is over twenty, and cover in the aggregate several hundred thousand dollars of State tax. After Judge PEARSON passes upon them, an appeal has to be taken to the Supreme Court by either party. That Court meets in May next, in Harrisburg, when the cases will be finally disposed of.

"ORGANIZE VICTORY."

The leading Democratic paper in New York proposes to "organize victory" by circulating Democratic papers and documents. With the Republicans the suggestion should have all the force it is intended to have with the Democrats. Nor should the five effort be delayed too long. No agency can be employed with anything like the effect that papers and documents will have. It should be the main reliance of the Republican party in the opening Presidential canvass, and, indeed, in every canvass. It is a lamentable fact, however, that in every contest, especially for President, tens of thousands of dollars are thrown away in useless parades and show which convince no one; when a small part of the money would be a safe reliance if laid out in reading matter. At any rate, the latter should never be omitted to gratify the desire for the former. The time has already come when Republicans should begin to sow the seed, by circulating newspapers and documents. Therefore, we beg leave to suggest to our political friends that the labor of the new year cannot be begun in a better way than by getting up clubs for the COMMERCIAL. We gratefully acknowledge the success of those who have already sent us names; but thousands in the place of hundreds should be circulated. If our friends think some other paper will answer the purpose better, let them make their selection, if it be only at once and with liberality. In clubs of twenty the COMMERCIAL will be sent for $1 50 a year, and a copy will be given to the person who gets up the club. If a greater amount or a greater variety of reading can be bought for an equal sum, we do not know it. With GRANT for our candidate, and Freedom and Progress our watchword, let us go directly to the heads and hearts of the people.

JOHNSON'S SCHEME TO SECURE THE NEXT PRESIDENCY.

JOHNSON'S oft-repeated declaration of regard for and abiding confidence in "the people"—his transparent demagogueism—were not without motive. Even at a time when the whole nation was disgusted with his actions and utterances, he kept his eye steadily on the succession in the White House, and has ever since been shaping his ends to accomplish that result. A Washington correspondent exposes the scheme, and gives the programme which the President has laid down in order to compel his nomination on the Democratic ticket. Having thus far failed to command the support of the Northern Democrats—such support as looks towards his nomination—he naturally feels indignant at them. He has done all in his power to secure their indorsement for the Presidency, but they stand aloof, regarding him as too much crippled to succeed in the race. He has now, in a rather startling programme, laid his plans for *making* them come to time. Tennessee is the field chosen for commencing the scheme. The bitterness of feeling existing between the factions in that State is expected to culminate next spring, at the county elections, in the prostration of the elements opposed to JOHNSON'S policy. Some time in April JOHNSON will "show his hand," and advise the holding of a Constitutional State Convention, at any time, and the reconstruction of the State Government. In return for this service, JOHNSON expects to have the electoral vote of Tennessee pledged for him. In this manner it is expected that Tennessee will be "redeemed." This State secured, the ice will be broken. The correspondent says:

"By a similar strategy the ten Southern States will be wheeled into line. With the prestige of success in Tennessee he will be an easy match for the Union men to declare once again the time for unrolling the Constitution as at last; that the Northern States are in the Union he has said so in a dozen messages already, and that they have a right to manage their own affairs and take part in the coming national election. The reconstruction acts will be made a nullity, by ordering the new State legislatures to mind their own business and let civil matters alone. In order to do this, they will repeal the test oath, according to the six months' clause of the Tenure of Office Bill, and restore Messrs. Stanton and Sheridan, the latter, placed in the War office ad interim, while the Stanton wrangle over such nominations as Johnson may choose to make. Then, as the nation generally expects the *dénouement* of political support from the States lately in rebellion, the Legislatures of eleven States thus secured, he expects to present to the National Democratic Convention the claims and virtues of making him their nominee, or of certain defeat. Such is the startling, but perfectly legitimate, programme, outlined for Johnson, by his friends in Washington, and so far as Tennessee is concerned. Seems to me with unlimited appeal to the hands of his long personal and political enemies of the President, morally old line Whigs. The Democrats cannot well gainsay it, because it is precisely what they would do if in power, and condemn it, however, is making the Southern States a mere foot-ball between these ambitious leaders, and as many obstacles to the consummation of this scheme, but with all these the friends of the President are sanguine, and feel confident that bold action will overcome all obstacles."

GENERAL GRANT.

The publication of the letter written by General GRANT to the President, four months since, energetically protesting against the removal of Secretary STANTON and General SHERIDAN, has knocked away the last prop that supported the single objection to him as the Republican candidate for the Presidency. The letter was a strictly private one, written with no expectation it would ever come before the public. If General GRANT is suspected of ever doing or saying anything for effect, certainly nothing of the sort can be alleged of this letter. It reflects the genuine sentiments of his heart,—sentiments he cherished sufficiently to plead for with the recreant occupant of the White House; sentiments he has done all in his power to infuse into the Administration of the country, and to which no man can doubt he will prove faithful, in whatever position he may be called to occupy. No one can fail to observe the tenacity with which he maintains the rights of "the loyal people," with whom he on all occasions identifies himself, and in whose name he warned the President to desist from contemplated acts. We conclude that hereafter we shall hear little or nothing of doubts and innuendoes—except, of course, from WENDELL PHILLIPS and his set—concerning Gen. GRANT'S principles in connection with the Presidential nomination at the hands of the Republican party. Of the papers that have been foremost and most persistent in endeavors to create distrust is the New York *Tribune*. But we conclude that even it has been convinced and now feels that it would be rank injustice to continue such endeavors, for on the letter itself it comments as follows:

"The long suppressed letter of Gen. Grant to the President, in which he so earnestly protests against the suspension of Secretary Stanton, and his hearty indorsement of Sheridan, more than *justifies the expectations of friends who have claimed that he is to fulfill* the old Cincinnati platform. They will be read with interest and delight as the frank avowals of a sincere patriot."

In Chicago the *Republican* has sympathized with the *Tribune*, but, like that paper, it yields the point and doubts no longer. Its language is as follows:

"The much-talked of letter from Gen. Grant to President Johnson, protesting against the removal of Secretary Stanton and Gen. Sheridan, has at last been made public as the result of a Congressional call for the documents in these cases. We presume there will be no further question in regard to Gen. Grant's political status after the perusal of this letter. We should not wonder that Mr. Johnson was unwilling that such a protest from the General of the Army should be laid before the people."

The *Post* is the name of a smart little penny daily, established in Philadelphia to support Mr. CHASE'S claims, and edited by a gentleman from the *Tribune*. Its labors to create distrust of General Grant, have been constant and zealous. It comments at length on the letter, and from its editorial we select the following:

"It is a noble letter that General Grant wrote to the President, protesting against the removal of Secretary Stanton and of General Sheridan. More direct and unmistakable proof that General Grant, on the first of last August, had no sympathy with the President's policy, and was in the main a friend of the policy of Congress, could not be given. * * * Its manly frankness in this letter, so manly and straightforward, with its ringing words at the end—'I know that I am right.'" And if Gen. Grant was right four months ago, on the questions with which the letter deals, we believe that he is not wrong now.

Most men of sense will, we conclude, be inclined to be reconciled to Gen. GRANT'S reticence, so long as he speaks as he has spoken when he has thought proper to say anything.

INVESTIGATION OF RAILROAD MANAGEMENT.

We learn that the Judiciary Committee of the Senate of Pennsylvania, which was instructed to give a thorough investigation into the management of the Railroads of the State, have closed their investigation, and agreed upon a final report. The testimony and report are now in the hands of the State Printer at Harrisburg, and will be printed by the time the Legislature meets. The testimony, we learn, has been fully reported, and will make a volume of one thousand pages. It contains the complaints of the business community in all parts of the State, fully three-fourths of which come from the Eastern section of the State, which has heretofore been supposed to be so well satisfied, that it had no complaints to make. It also contains the testimony of the leading railroad managers of the State, giving their answers and explanations of most of the complaints made, so that both sides have been fully heard and their testimony will be spread before the people of the State. This document, we believe, will be by far the most valuable of any ever laid before the Legislature to show the working of our existing railroad lines, and enable that body to act understandingly on the subject of future railroad legislation. Complaints are not by any means confined to those cut off from the enjoyments of railroad facilities. Most of those now having them are clamorous for new railroads, so that competition may relieve them from the evils connected with existing lines.

THE Oracle is at it again. He perceives a "weathercock" inconsistency in condemning the bailing of JEFF. DAVIS and approving the proposition to permit Southerners disqualified from voting to become voters on taking an oath that for the last three months they have supported the reconstruction laws and will continue to support them. This wonderful Oracle no doubt thinks this would open the way to the ballot box for JEFF. DAVIS. If JEFF. DAVIS has been and will be the supporter of the Reconstruction laws, it doubtless would; but it takes an Oracle to discover the danger lurking in the plan, and the inconsistency of which they who condemned the bailing of DAVIS are guilty in approving it, for nobody not endowed with less wisdom than our Oracle, could have the news that DAVIS and THAD. STEVENS have been all the while, and are still, acting together.

There are in the South a large number of true and loyal men, who, by the terms of the Reconstruction laws, are disfranchised. Last week Senator WILSON prepared a bill relieving by name some hundred and fifty of that class from this disability. Thousands more are just as deserving, but to search them all out or for them to present themselves for special enactment would be impracticable. With the view of getting at a way whereby all these cases would be reached, the *Tribune* proposed the above oath, and we believe it was the *Tribune* that said that no one but a born blockhead would suggest that it could work injury to any body or anything in the interest of loyalty or justice, while it would be a stroke of simple justice to a large class of as true men as live.

The Republicans in Congress are prepared to go still farther in this direction, and we call the Oracle's attention to one fact on this point. The Tennessee delegation in Congress (except PATTERSON) have united in a petition to the Legislature of their State to repeal a portion of the Franchise Law. They say:

"To the Senate and House of Representatives of Tennessee:

The undersigned, citizens of the State, your constituents and personal and political friends, respectfully and earnestly pray that you will repeal the sixteenth section of the Franchise act, thus giving full effect to the principle on which is based our restored State Government, by obliterating from the statute books the last vestige of legislation which imposes disabilities where there has been no blame and which neither time nor merit can remove. It would gratify us, and we feel sure it would gratify the great body of your constituents, to know that you had acted in this matter promptly and unanimously, and in unity of action with your delegation.

WASHINGTON, December 7.

Signed, Joseph S. Fowler, Horace Maynard, W. B. Stokes, James Mullins, A. J. P. Mann, John Trimble, Samuel M. Arnell.

The above was prepared after a full conference with the Republicans in both Houses of Congress, and is the initial step to a general policy, which doubtless is destined to encounter the terrible rebuke of Sir ORACLE.

THE *World* has become deeply concerned for Gen. GRANT on account of his "reticence." It is probable that it has not seen the General's letter to the President, bearing date more than four months ago, wherein he frees his mind in a manner that leaves nothing unsaid that could be said with advantage. On that, as on other occasions—for instance his protest against the removal of SHERIDAN—he opened like a battery. Indeed, Gen. GRANT, in the matter of speaking and writing, is very much like a battery which opens only when there is occasion for it and never for effect or fun; and, like a well served battery, too, he sends his shots straight to the point with deliberation and effect. The truth is, Gen. GRANT times his speaking with rare wisdom—a fact which his countrymen have come to recognize and appreciate. A while ago it is probable that there were some not opposed to him who desired him to be more communicative, in other words, play the aspirant, make bids for the Presidency after the fashion of the politicians, and submit himself to the direction of those whose mission is to "fix things"—political doctors famous chiefly for killing the patient. It is no exaggeration to say that no man, at present in public life, in whatever it falls to him to do, more fully realizes the highest expectations of even his most ardent admirers than General GRANT. His statesmanship consists, while occupying high positions, in dealing practically and successfully with public affairs, then certainly General GRANT, though making no pretensions, is fully entitled to be credited with that quality. Those who knew him best early spoke of him as a man equal to the performance, not creditably merely, but in a manner that would leave little to be desired, of the duties of any station he would accept. To this order of men General GRANT unquestionably belongs.

THE sympathies of the country will very naturally be with Gen. HANCOCK in his great affliction. To be the recipient of the extraordinary praise which ANDREW JOHNSON in the most extraordinary manner ever heard of lavishes upon him, the General must conclude that he has done something so inconsistent with his former acts that his standing among loyal men must necessarily be extremely jeopardised. And perhaps such is the fact. At any rate, most of decent men will at once conclude that he must have done something of a very extraordinary character to be so lavishly praised by the recreant occupant of the White House. We see that the motive of the President is a puzzle with all sorts of people in Washington. It certainly could not have been a good one. The most sensible conclusion is, that, perceiving HANCOCK looming up somewhat in the Presidential horizon, he concluded to kill him off, and as the quickest and most certain way, he resolved to praise him. The device certainly does credit to the President's penetration, and evinces a most accurate perception of his own standing. HANCOCK is a clever soldier—though a rather light man and ambitious; and on the whole was worthy of a better fate than he has received at the hands of Mr. JOHNSON.

THE details of the accident on the Lake Shore Railroad, whereby some forty of fifty human beings, in a wrecked car, were roasted to death, are almost too shocking for perusal. There must be a fearful responsibility somewhere, though it is hardly probable it will be ever located, or penalty of any kind inflicted on any one. This is the second accident of the kind within a month, and accidents of this description in the last few years have been more or less frequent. It is, therefore, proper to suggest that means should be employed to guard against the contingency of cars taking fire when thrown from the track or otherwise knocked about. Fearful experience demands that when passengers enter a car they shall feel safe from being roasted alive. The liability to such a dreadful fate, in consequence of the means employed to warm cars, certainly does exist; and being burned alive, it appears, is not the remotest contingency of traveling by railroad.

IN sending to Congress his extraordinary message nominating HANCOCK for President, Mr. JOHNSON, according to the general belief, was influenced by a malicious motive towards the Democratic party—more especially the friends of PENDLETON, SEYMOUR and the old stagers who, while ready to accept his patronage, have steadily refused to indorse him. His idea seems to have been that by bringing HANCOCK forward he would knock all other candidates, and perhaps HANCOCK too, into a cocked hat, or something else. At any rate, this is one of the interpretations now given to the extraordinary message. Our Democratic contemporary, the *Post*, derides the performance thus:

"The coolest joke of the season is the presentation of the name of General Hancock by the President to Congress for some signal mark of favor, for the assertion of the constitutional fact that the civil shall be placed above the military power. We hope the President will instruct the four other Military Commanders to imitate the course of Hancock. Won't Congress make the General a Christmas gift.

IT is given out that the whisky men are willing to pay two millions of dollars to get through Congress the repeal of the law declaring contraband all whisky sold for less than two dollars a gallon, besides some other little *reforms* which they deem necessary for the public good. Seeing that they defraud the Government out of $80,000,000 or $100,000,000 a year, it is probable they can afford it. It is to be hoped, however, that there is virtue enough in Congress to resist them. Before the whisky tax laws are touched, we hope a genuine effort will be made to enforce them. A fair trial has not yet been made. From the Department down to the lowest revenue post, how not to do it has been the order of the day and every day. Of course we do not mean that there are no honest Revenue Officers; but we do mean that the frauds and the consequent loss of not less than one hundred millions the last year, are the direct result of inefficiency and dishonesty, through all the way from Washington to the remotest whisky still in the land.

THE present system of heating and lighting cars greatly increase the risk of railroad travel. In sleeping cars the peril is especially great. The smashing of a sleeping car, or even the upsetting of such a car, is almost certain death to passengers—death, too, in a manner the most horrible. The Camden and Amboy Railroad management is generally voted old fogy; yet the possibility of heating cars by means of hot water, and of lighting cars by means of gas, was demonstrated on that road. Let any of our roads adopt this plan and they will command the passenger business, while they will receive, in addition the thanks of the traveling public. There has been too much of the roasting business. Stoves and coal oil should be thrown out of railway cars.—*Cincinnati Gazette.*

If great improvements spring from startling experience, one would suppose that in the matter of warming cars we would not have to wait long for a change. If the Camden and Amboy Company have demonstrated the practicability of heating cars by means of hot water, then there is little reason for delay. In England, where the temperature is not as low as here, hot water is employed almost exclusively. Whatever be the practicability of this method of insuring safety and comfort, it is clearly the duty of the managers of the great roads to take hold of the matter in earnest and at once. The field is an inviting one to inventors and practical men.

THE Philadelphia Board of Trade have under consideration a proposition for an additional Ice Boat on the Delaware, to be maintained at the State's expense. To this end an application will be made to the Legislature at the ensuing session. For several years, enterprises in which different sections of the State are vitally interested—the Connellsville Railroad for instance—have been before the Legislature for simple justice; and almost uniformly experienced strong if not fatal opposition from Philadelphia. She is about to come herself for an appropriation from the public treasury in support of an object, the merits of which we have no occasion to discuss now, but which will be fortunate if it can command a small part of the reasons in its favor which back the application of the Connellsville Company, and the petitions for a Free Railroad Law. Our only object now is to express the hope that Philadelphia will liberalize her views and actions, to the extent at least that when she asks legislation and money in her own behalf, she will stand prepared to accord long denied justice to others. If such be not her attitude, she can scarcely expect to have anything she may ask for granted.

GEN. STEEDMAN has gone to New Orleans. His business is to see Gen. HANCOCK about the Presidency, and he has gone as the messenger from the White House. Mr. JOHNSON has a programme, and HANCOCK has the honor of having been chosen his instrument. A variety of motives are in the case, not the least of which is a desire to head off GRANT, between whom and Mr. JOHNSON no love is being lost just now. Besides this, the Democratic party must be suited for having slighted the President in addition to this the man has really come to believe that he can control the politics of the country, and has an idea of setting up for himself, after he has killed off PENDLETON, SEYMOUR & CO., with HANCOCK. Gen. STEEDMAN, therefore, goes down to New Orleans to groom the Commander of the Fifth District.

WENDELL PHILLIPS labors under the impression that nobody but himself dares to tell the truth. In a late lecture he said:

"Twenty years ago I took a copy of the New York Independent and fearless Jos. T. Buckingham, an article of which I asked the lecturer, Lucy Stone, if she assented, saying as I handed it to him, 'of course I will print it, but it will ruin the paper.' She looked it over, and said, 'no.' Well, I flung it into the stove, unwilling to risk the paper's fortune, and he continued to print, saying 'have you lived so long and not learned that a journal has a character, a capital, and its editor has private fortune before it as an investment?' tell what he thinks!"

With Mr. PHILLIPS—judging from his own course—independence consists in putting forth extravagant ideas and making exaggerated statements. It is probable that he would call BRICK POMEROY an independent editor. There may have been no independent editors twenty years ago—for there were few BRICK POMEROYS then—but as for the present time, we fancy the trouble with Mr. PHILLIPS arises from the fact there are so many.

VALLANDIGHAM appears to be gaining ground in the Ohio Senatorial contest. An important point in his favor has been gained by obtaining possession of the State Central Committee, who have called a State Convention to meet on the 8th day of January. The object of this movement is to create an outside pressure from the Democratic masses with whom he is the favorite. A serious breach has unquestionably been made in THURMAN'S ranks, and the leaders who have counted on an easy victory for him are by no means as confident as they were.

MR. WEED says that Judge CHASE has "given up" the negro suffrage question in the North. This must be a mistake; for it is well known that the negroes in the South are expected to go for him almost or quite in a body, which they would not do if he was not true to their race in the North. We perceive that the Georgia Constitutional Convention, where there are a good many negroes, has inaugurated a movement for Judge CHASE for President, which also is wholly inconsistent with Mr. WEED'S representation of his position on the suffrage question.

THE purchase of St. Thomas is not likely to be consummated, the Senate Committee being unanimously opposed to the treaty, which will be reported to the Senate for discussion and defeat. The feeling of economy is growing stronger, else the purchase would be made, backed as the proposal is by many reasons which ordinarily prevail.

GEN. FRANKLIN has sent a letter to Gen. Grant in behalf of Fitz John Porter, which concludes as follows:

"For my part, I know that Porter was as loyal as the most loyal soldier now dead,